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WASHTENAW JEWISH NEWS

April 2024 AdarII/Nissan 5784 Volume XXIV Number 8 FREE

The Passover seder this year.

Jacob Gurvis, originally for the JTA

As the American-Israeli poet Marty Herskovitz thought about the upcoming Passover holiday, the prospect of singing "Dayenu" at the first seder since his country was attacked didn't sit right with him.

The classic Passover song, whose title means "It would have been enough," expresses gratitude about how much God has done for the Jewish people. But Herskovitz, the son of a Holocaust survivor who has lived in Israel since 1986, thought the words would ring hollow at a time when so many Jews are at risk.

"We have to take the text and find a way to make it relevant and not just say the words that seem so impossible to say," Herskovitz told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "'Dayenu, it's enough.' It's clearly not enough. As long as people are trapped in Gaza, that's not enough. As long as our soldiers are still risking their lives, it's not enough. We can't say 'Dayenu.' It can't be, you know, 'Praise God for this situation.' So we have to find new texts."

Rabbinical seminaries in Israel and the U.S. are producing haggadah supplements to help Jewish communities navigate the trauma of Oct. 7 during the Passover seder. (JTA illustration by Grace Yagel)

It's a mission that has long animated Herskovitz, who used the financial reward from a legal settlement after his then teenaged son was injured in a terrorist attack in 2001 to create a fund to support education initiatives in Israel. The fund has backed his own Creating Memory initiative at Bar-Ilan University, which focuses on Holocaust remembrance through art, and also Israel's Conservative Schechter Rabbinical Seminary.

This year, at Herskovitz's urging, Schechter convened dozens of rabbis and Jewish community leaders from across Israel last month to reimagine the haggadah, the core text of the Passover seder. The result of their work will be a supplement for Israeli families

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Discussing seder at the JPOC table

By Deborah Meyers Greene

Pssover is a deeply resonant holiday for many Jewish People of Color. On Sunday, April 7, Ann Arbor-area JPOC and their families are invited to join a discussion on the topic.

The haggadah, the seder, and the songs of Pesach hold special meaning and promise for Jewish People of Color — be they descendants of America's enslaved people; descendants of Japanese families that were incarcerated in the western U.S. during World War II; Native/Indigenous Jews whose ancestors were bludgeoned and, in some cases, obliterated by encroaching Europeans; or Latin Jews whose families escaped hardship or persecution in Cuba or South or Central America.

Bryan Roby, associate professor of Judaic Studies and Middle Eastern Studies at U-M, will provide expert direction as participants explore questions such as: How do Jewish People of Color express their histories in tandem with the traditional Passover story? How do their many and varied stories impact the celebration? How do JPOC incorporate their food traditions at the seder? Can the seder plate reflect the ancestors' stories? Can the haggadah adapt to the rapidly increasing racial and

In this oil painting on canvas in the Rubin Museum collection, Reuven Rubin (1893-1974) depicts a representative gathering of the new state. A Hasidic rabbi, Bukharan immigrants, kibbutznikim, Yemenites, a Palmach fighter, the artist and his family, and even Jesus attend the traditional meal of the Passover seder, a true reconciliation of groups and religions. To quote Carmela Rubin, the artist's daughter-in-law and curator of the Rubin Museum: "The children and babies personify the promises of a new generation, and Rubin implies that with the birth of the Jewish state, a new page has been turned in world history." (Image copyright the Rubin Museum, Tel Aviv)

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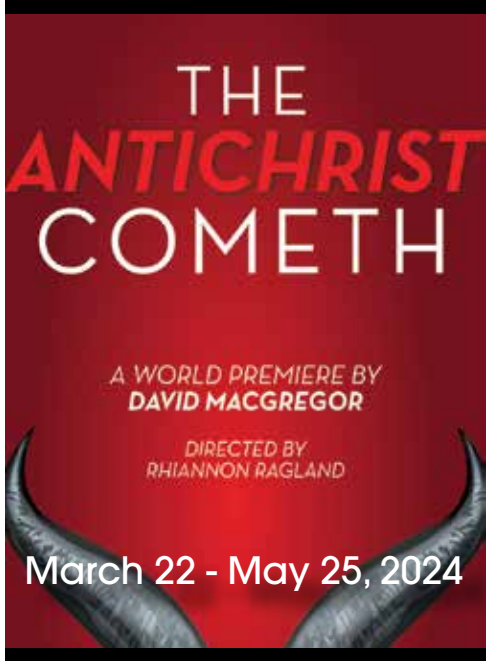

The Antichrist Cometh is a comedy about a happily married man who discovers that he might be the Antichrist. Will he be able to enjoy a small dinner party with his loving wife, former college roommate, and his roommate's devoutly religious fiancée? Or will their home-cooked meal usher in the Apocalypse?

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From the Editor

Creative, together

As I sat down to write this "From the Editor" column, I was at a loss for words. Purim was just yesterday, and in many Jewish households the Passover cleaning and cooking will have commenced. But every message I almost formed was punctuated by a thud: another bomb has dropped on Gaza meaning more death and destruction, and the hostages are still there.

So, to get my thoughts together, I looked at what I wrote for last April's WJN. I found this:

"Over the past few months, I've used the phrase "creative Judaism" several times in conversation, and often the person I am speaking to asks, "What's that? Not a new denomination, I hope." No, I don't mean anything formal. I'm thinking about what happens when contemporary artists, writers, davenners, parents, teachers, and students use our traditions and the world around us to create. I'm a bit surprised by the question since it seems that making Judaism anew has been going on my whole life. Whether or not 'creative Judaism' is a useful moniker, we are swimming it its sea."

And so it is: our tradition of adding to our traditions, even in this dreadful moment, is strong. Whether it's Purim (see page 8 on the "Chapter 9 Project"), Passover (many articles throughout), or Shabbat (see Mega Shabbat page 10 and Cease-fire Shabbat page 6), the Jewish creative spirit is strong.

As is the Palestinian creative spirit. Do yourself a favor — if further breaking your heart can be a favor — and explore Palestinian poetry and art. This morning I reread "Requiem," written after the Sabra and Shatilla massacres in 1982 by Antón Shammás Professor Emeritus of Middle East Literature in the Departments of Comparative Literature and Middle East Studies at the University of Michigan. When he sent it into the journal Critical Inquiry in December, he added the note: "Shatila. Rosh Hashanah, 1982…… and now Gaza, Hanukkah, 2023." The poem begins, "Please hold on, until I'm ready. It'll take some time, some precious/time, and you must be cold out there, no doubt, where you stand./But both of us, how should I say, must wear the shroud/of patience, I mean especially I. What'd you say?" [Thank you, Shachar Pinsker, for pointing me to this poem, and many others.]

I also just received word of the Israeli/Palestinian group, "Standing Together," visiting the University of Michigan on April 4. Standing Together is an idea and a movement of Jews and Palestinians working to change the political paradigm toward a future of equality. I'm here for it.

Learn more in person April 4. If you miss it, find a recording. ■

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Rabbi Asher Lopatin comes onboard with Ann Arbor Federation

By Rachel Wall, Communications and Development Manager at Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor is thrilled to welcome Rabbi Asher Lopatin to its professional team as Director of Community Relations. He began in this role in early March.

Most recently, Asher served as the Executive Director of the JCRC/AJC of Detroit. In this new role, Asher will expand the Ann Arbor Federation's government and media relations, foster collaborative and supportive interactions with local Jewish organizations, and deepen relationships with non-Jewish communities in Southeast Michigan.

He is the founding and current rabbi of Kehillat Etz Chayim of Detroit, as well as the founding director of the Detroit Center for Civil Discourse. A Rhodes Scholar and a Truman Fellow with an M. Phil in Medieval Arabic Thought from Oxford University, Asher has also done doctoral work at St. Antony's College, Oxford, in Islamic fundamentalist attitudes towards Jews and Israel. He has written chapters for over 20 books and numerous articles.

Prior to moving with his wife, Rachel, and their four children to Detroit, Asher served as president of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School, and, before that, served as the rabbi of Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation in Chicago. He received ordination from Rav Ahron Soloveichik and Yeshivas Brisk in Chicago, and from Yeshiva University. Asher is a permanent member of The Council on Foreign Relations and a member of the Coalition for Black and Jewish Unity.

Asher says he is excited to join the Ann Arbor Federation's professional team. "The work of community relations and advocacy never has been more important," he observes, "and I am eager to continue it at a critical time for a community that is home to University of Michigan, one of the nation's most significant universities, as well as Eastern Michigan University, an important academic institution in its own right, and a diverse, dynamic Jewish community."

Asher can be reached at asher@jewishannarbor.org. To learn more about the work of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, visit JewishAnnArbor.org. ■

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Chabad invites all to experience the warmth of Community Seder

Passover, the festival of freedom, is just around the corner, and Chabad is thrilled to announce the return of our highly anticipated Community Seder. In a spirit of inclusivity, we are excited to open our doors to all community members.

Last year marked the first exclusive Community Seder hosted by Chabad, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Attendees shared their delight in experiencing an evening that felt both homey and authentic. The gathering brought together a wonderful mix of adults and children, fostering a warm and inclusive atmosphere that resonated with the spirit of Passover.

This year's Community Seder promises to be an even more extraordinary affair, featuring a sumptuous full-course dinner that will take participants on a delectable journey through traditional Passover dishes from gefilte fish to brisket and, of course, the essential matza.

The heart of the evening lies in the family-oriented seder itself, where we will delve into the Passover story with engaging games, captivating stories, enlightening explanations, and much more. This celebration is an opportunity for individuals and families, regardless of background or familiarity with Passover customs, to come together, learn, and celebrate in a welcoming environment.

The Community Seder will be the night of the first seder, Monday, April 22, at the Ann Arbor Senior Center, set to begin at 7:15 p.m., providing the perfect setting for families and individuals seeking a meaningful Passover experience. If you are searching for a place to join a seder but haven't found the right fit, look no further — Chabad welcomes you with open arms.

Whether you are a seasoned participant in Passover Seders or a newcomer to the celebration, our Community Seder is designed to accommodate everyone. Come and be a part of a night filled with joy, tradition, and the warmth of community.

To reserve your spot and for more information, please contact Shternie at director@mycampganisrael.com or to reserve www.jewmich.com/events

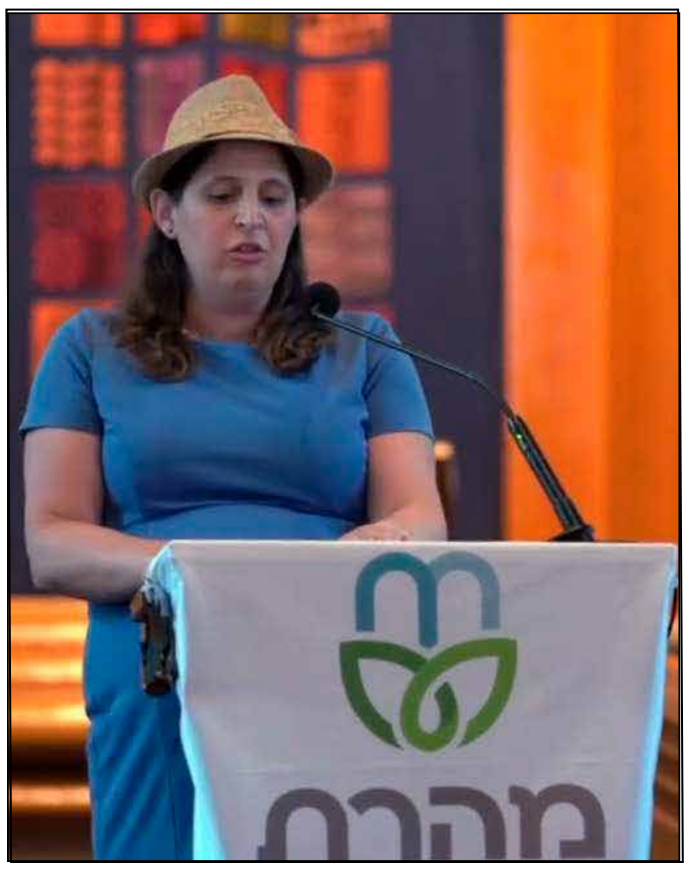
Wishing you and your loved ones a joyous and meaningful Passover celebration! ■

Finding hope during Pesach

By Rabba Yael Keller

Pesach is one of my favorite holidays. It comes in the spring, a time often filled with hope. This year feels like a pesach where we definitely need to hold onto hope during a difficult year.

When we think back to the Exodus story, it is easy to imagine that B'nai Yisrael, the Children of Israel, might have struggled to find hope, even amid the miracles of the plagues and the splitting of the sea. After all, there is an understanding that when B'nai Yisrael left Egypt, they fled with only the dough on their back. The dough didn't have time to rise and became matzah, also known as lechem oni — bread of affliction. When we eat matzah each year on Pesach, it can help us feel like our ancestors when they were slaves. We eat marror, the bitter herbs, and dip our karpas into salt water to bring us further into the slave experience.



And yet, we also think of Pesach as a holiday of redemption, renewal, and joy. How do we find hope for a brighter, stronger future amid the memories and symbolism of the bitterness of slavery?

There are two remarkable midrashim that imagine B'nai Yisrael finding a way to preserve hope and look to the future in the immediate aftermath of the Exodus. The Torah tells us that immediately after crossing the Red Sea, Miriam and the women had timbrels to use when singing praise to God. The midrash wonders, how did they know to bring musical instruments for a celebration? By packing timbrels in their bags and thinking not only of what is needed for survival but what is needed for celebration, Miriam and the other women displayed enormous hope, enormous faith that they would be redeemed.

Later, when it comes time to build the mishkan, the tabernacle, as a space in which God can dwell among the Children of Israel, the midrash asks where the Jews found enough materials to build such a beautiful space for God. The Torah tells us the Jews brought beautiful, dyed wools and acadia wood when leaving Egypt. One rabbi suggests that B'nai Yisrael had been preparing for this moment for generations. The patriarch, Jacob, and his 12 sons went down to Egypt hundreds of years before the Exodus. For a short time, they were able to live comfortably in the land as guests, even if not as a nation yet in their own land. On Jacob's deathbed, he was able to dream of a future in which his children, and their children and grandchildren, would leave Egypt and would build a sanctified space for God. Jacob instructed his sons to save things to prepare for that moment. When the people left Egypt, they carried their family heirlooms, the wealth they had saved away before being enslaved. They carried a memory of a patriarch that could worship God as he saw fit, a family tradition of faith with which to rebuild in freedom. Although they were not yet a free people, they carried a hope for a time when they would be free to serve God as they wished. By bringing the treasures they had saved for generations, they carried a connection between the past and the future. They carried the materials to build a house for God's presence in the desert.

At a time where the future seemed scary and unknown, the Jewish people packed their bags full of hope and a vision for a positive future. The four cups of wine we drink at the seder are a beautiful remembrance of this hope. The Jerusalem Talmud explains that the four cups of wine we drink at the seder remind us of the four stages of redemption from Egypt, based on verses in the Book of Exodus (6:6–7) that use four different words to describe the Exodus process. 1. Hotzeiti — God takes the Children of Israel away from hard labor, 2. Hitzalti — God saves us from the institution of slavery, 3. Ga'alti — God redeems us as a people, and 4. Lakachti — God takes us to be God's holy nation. Each of these moments of redemption is viewed as important in its own right and gives us hope, as each of them is a step forward to a full redemption. Freedom doesn't often happen in an instant. It is about a process. About recognizing each stage, finding gratitude, remaining hopeful that the next stage is coming.

There is one final word to describe the redemption in the following verse (6:8). God promises Haiveiti — God will bring us to the Land of Israel. The Torah Temima, Rabbi Baruch Halevi Epstein, asks, if there is a fifth stage of redemption, why do we drink only four cups of wine at the Seder, not five? Writing in 1902, Rabbi Epstein concluded that although no less important than the other phases of redemption, we don't drink a fifth cup because many of us are still celebrating Pesach in the diaspora. Our nation is still waiting — waiting to live in Israel, waiting for Israel to be safe and secure for the Jewish people, waiting for a time when not just Israel, but her neighbors, can also live safely and securely with safe drinking water, enough food, and the comforts of their own homes. We may not all wish for the full, final redemption Rabbi Epstein describes, but we surely wish for more redemption in Israel today. We can celebrate the redemptions that have happened thus far, while still wishing for more peace, more safety, more freedom.

Although we don't drink it, there is actually a fifth cup that features on our Seder Table each year. We place Elijah's cup on the table, filled and ready, as a sign of our hope and belief in the next phase of redemption. At the end of our seder we make a hopeful declaration — next year in Jerusalem! May we all be able to sit down to our seder this month with praise and gratitude to God for the hope and promise of continuing towards redemption and a better world in the year to come. ■

What time is it on the clock of the world?

By Jake Ehrlich, a Jewish educator and graduate of University of Michigan Jewish Communal Leadership Program, and Lex Eisenberg, a Jewish organizer and educator at the University of Michigan.

Let's talk Jewish time. Mishnah Rosh Hashanah notably begins, Arba'ah roshei shanim hem: "There are four new years" in the Jewish calendar, each with a different purpose. These include the first of Nisan (technically the first month of the Jewish year, featuring Passover), the first of Elul (the new year for animal tithes), the first of Tishrei (the new year for years, i.e. Rosh Hashanah as we know it), and the first or fifteenth Shvat (Tu Bishvat, now well-known as the new year of the trees). On the Gregorian calendar, these translate roughly to: April 1, September 1, October 1, and February 1 or 15. Notably, our holiest of Jewish observances — the High Holidays in autumn and Passover in spring — are positioned six months apart, marking opposite poles on the round of the year.

Nu — so what?

Detroit organizer and philosopher Grace Lee Boggs once inquired: "What time is it on the clock of the world?" By the time of publication, it will be six months since the horrific day of October 7. A whole half of a year, spanning — the Mishnah would say — from one Rosh Hashanah, through another, to another. In Jewish time, we might measure this as six periods of shloshim (30-day period of mourning).

This time, however, has not been spent healing the trauma experienced by Israeli society, or soothing the profound grief and fear faced by Jews around the world. Rather, mainstream American Jewish institutions have rallied by the blue-and-white flag and beat the drums of war, as Israel's government and military has inflicted this trauma 25 times over on the population of Gaza.

In a rapid pivot from the absolution offered by our teshuvah (repentance) on Yom Kippur — and in violation of pikuach nefesh, the Jewish value that sanctifies human life as central to our tradition, our society, and our commandments — our people have brought about the deaths of 30,000+ Palestinians through Israeli bombs, bullets, and blockade. Those reported death tolls, horrifyingly, do not account for the tens of thousands who will perish under the rubble of buildings, children condemned to die from starvation, and elders deprived of medical care due to the destruction of hospitals.

This is made possible by U.S. military aid and weaponry, resolute carte blanche support from our President and key lawmakers, as well as the massive support drives of Jewish Federations across the country — like Detroit's, which to date boasts having donated $28.5 million in donations in emergency aid to Israel, with $100,000 specifically to support the IDF.

It has been six months of nightmarish conditions for the hostages still imprisoned in Gaza. But instead of focusing on the mitzvah of pidyon shevuyim (the rescue of hostages) Netanyahu and Israel's top brass pursue "decisive victory," a fantasy of the complete dismantling of Hamas — whose name in Arabic is an acronym for "Islamic Resistance Movement." Do Bibi and others believe that this relentless operation of devastation and dehumanization will serve to quell Islamic resistance in the region? Ipcha mistabra, on the contrary, this campaign seems designed for the precise opposite.

Unfortunately, many Jews in Israel and around the world have fallen prey to Netanyahu's opportunistic manipulation of our trauma for his own political ends. The continued siege of Gaza means that Netanyahu gets to shore up his political legitimacy — which was all but depleted pre-October 7 — and his right-wing coalition gets to effect their vision of a lasting resolution of the Palestinian question — by destroying or driving away Palestinians in their totality.

Since the first days following October 7, Jewish activist groups have refused this manipulation, sensing accurately that the genocidal rhetoric espoused by Israel's ministers means ongoing Nakba — catastrophe — for Palestinians. Groups like Rabbis for Ceasefire, Jewish Voice for Peace, and If Not Now have called attention to this deplorable, heartbreaking reality, and are participants in the global movement to initiate an immediate and lasting ceasefire — a movement that includes the majority of U.S. Democrats, rapporteurs from the United Nations, unions like the United Auto Workers and Service Employees International Union, and beyond.

While we agree that antisemitism is a real and growing threat, it is ignorant at best to claim that this principled international anti-war movement is driven by anti-Jewish animus. Such allegations serve to conflate the State of Israel with the Jewish people, a problematic equation that makes the world's Jews into targets when Israel acts deplorably. Meanwhile, communal organizations like the Anti-Defamation League prioritize the suppression of pro-Palestine and anti-Zionist activism (including Jewish-led efforts) to the detriment of their work against legitimate hate groups, as admitted by an ADL staffer in a January 2024 article in The Guardian.

None of this is to pasken/legislate on the question of "Do countries have a right to defend themselves?" To these authors: corporations are not people, countries do not have rights. People have the right to live in safety, freedom, dignity and peace. People have the right to not be the targets of indiscriminate killing and collective punishment. Kulanu, all of us. ■

Let's talk Jewish time. During the upcoming holiday of Passover, our tradition invites us to ground in our foundational collective narrative: as we recall our own people's journey from slavery to liberation and move from degradation to exaltation, we are also called to recognize and empathize with the "stranger" in our midst — all those who remain unfree. In the past six months — or 75 years — have we forgotten where we came from? Has the weaponization of our trauma and fear brought about a shift in the who's who of this story?

It is hard to read the Exodus story in 2024 and not find affinity between our oppressed ancestors and the assaulted, occupied, long-suffering Palestinians. We are called to consider: How will this national trauma be remembered and retold by Palestinian survivors? What legacies and values will come to define the Jewish people? And who are the Pharaohs of our time?

Our communal and national leaders continue to harden their hearts at the call of ceasefire, even as the death toll surpasses 30,000 precious lives. For those who feel that this moment calls for a chorus of "Am Yisrael Chai" ("The Jewish people live"), we offer the tochecha (rebuke) that God gave to the angels who sought to rejoice at the events of the Exodus: "The work of my hands are drowning in the sea, and you wish to sing songs!?" (Megillah 10b)

Let's talk Jewish time: Arba'ah roshei shanim hem... There are four new years. Let this be the last that harbors war. This time, may we all cross the sea to freedom. ■

Simone Yehuda

Exile, Reencountered

You know, ever since October seven,
I haven't been able to count to ten.

I lose myself, get stuck half-way
through every single wretched day,

my parents' eternal loss of home
again coating my soul like a secret poem.

I try not to imagine the unimaginable slaughters
of so many fathers, sons, mothers & daughters.

I struggle to learn how to abide
the ambiguity of the "other" side.

Perspective was and is what matters most,
but what to do when it's become a ghost?

Today I am seared with the kind of pain
that keeps me awake, leaves a dark stain

on the fragile skeletons of deathless grief
birthing anew old mountains of disbelief.

I must endure yet one more time
the hopelessness, the endless climb

to a world of safety, imagined or real,
where I'll be allowed to really feel.

Ceasefire Shabbat fosters community

By Rebecca Epstein, Shamati Co-Founder

On February 9, a group of beautiful Jewish people welcomed Shabbat in beloved community at the Ann Arbor Senior Center. With only two weeks of planning approximately 50 people attended, enjoying each other and scrumptious Middle Eastern food from Stars Cafe. The event fostered community among Jews calling for a ceasefire and a just peace in Palestine and Israel.

Conversation flowed freely, but if people wanted a jumping off point for conversations, there were readings and contemplative questions placed on each table:

"'67 Remembered," a poem by Irena Klepfisz, born in the Warsaw Ghetto.

"If I Must Die," a poem by Refaat Alareer, killed in an Israeli airstrike on December 6, 2023.

Questions:

What do you love about being Jewish? What's your favorite Jewish memory?

What can we as Jews do to stand against antisemitism while not equating antisemitism and anti-Zionism?

What does collective liberation mean to you? What does it look like?

What can we as Jews do to support Palestinians in our community and in Palestine?

What can we as Jews do to support Israeli activists working towards a just and lasting peace?

Attendees appreciated the event. Laurie White said, "As someone who has been involved with building local Jewish and Palestinian solidarity for decades, this event allowed me the opportunity to discover others (especially from the local Jewish community) who have similar values to mine, and who are deeply concerned about Israel's current policies and behavior."

Another attendee, Jackie Heymann, said, "I, like many, have felt perpetually sad, heartbroken, and angry over the past four months. Beginning on October 7, I was heartbroken over the Israelis killed and taken hostage. Each day my heart breaks further as Israel has imposed horrific collective punishment onto the 2.2 million Palestinians in Gaza through mass murder, forced displacement, starvation, and demolition of cultural institutions. While the Jewish institutions in the Ann Arbor area have continued to insist that Israel's genocide in Gaza is simply 'Israel defending itself,' I have been wanting to be in community with folks who also believe there is no military solution to this crisis — the Ceasefire Shabbat was just that. I am immensely grateful to be able to be in community with other Jewish community members who are also dedicated to a future where both Palestinians and Israelis have access to freedom and dignity."

"At the recent Shabbat Ceasefire, I met new and wonderful people with conversation starters relevant to the event. We all shared a meal and welcomed the Sabbath with

The writer's treasured Shabb at candlesticks which once belonged her paternal Great Grandmother Martha Miller who immigrated to Washington, D.C. from Vilnius, Lithuania, in the late 1800s.

niggunim and blessings over candle lighting, grape juice, and challah. Knowing upon arrival that most everyone was on the 'same page' released a valve on the pressure cooker. There was no need to worry about offending someone or of being called a self-hating Jew or antisemitic. Those of us with the courage to call for a ceasefire could finally talk, not as activists at a rally or on Zoom, but as Jews celebrating our heritage with rituals that once did, still do, or might begin to rekindle our spiritual paths — together. Kudos to the young mothers who pulled this off and to their energy for following up," said attendee Lauren Zinn.

Ruth Kraut said, "It was so nice to work toward creating community and social action in a Jewish context. A bonus for me was that I met some people who are new to town!"

"I think the thing I appreciated most about the Shabbat Ceasefire was the sense of comfort and security in the room that has been absent lately in so many Jewish spaces. I didn't have to ask or worry, 'can I say this?' 'Which side are they on?' It was so nice to be able to come together without that worry. I didn't realize how much it was weighing on me until it was absent," contributed Deborah Kraus.

Brenna Reichman said, "The organizers invited people to join who were pro-ceasefire or ceasefire-curious and this helped me feel welcome to show up with the parts of myself that clearly see the horror of what is happening in Gaza and the parts of myself that are unclear about a path forward."

After the event, an email was sent to attendees gauging interest in follow-up actions and celebrations. Shamati organizers are hopeful that this informal collective of like-minded Jews will continue to grow as we find each other, with more events on the horizon. If you would like to be included in future invitations, please email rebeccadanaepstein@gmail.com. ■

The following letter was written by local Jewish community members who originally came together through an If Not Now Ceasefire Circle. This letter was completed on March 1st and signed by 90 community members as of March 14th.

Sadly, the statistics below are no longer accurate: many more people have been killed, displaced, and debilitated. Please consider adding your name to the letter at the following link, bit.ly/A2JewsforCeasefire.

To the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor:

We are members of the Jewish community of Washtenaw County. We feel anguish and heartbreak over the loss of life in Palestine/Israel — both the atrocities of October 7, and the atrocities of civilian death, disease, and starvation in Gaza. Since October 7, The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor has rallied its members to speak on our behalf—that we "stand with Israel" and that we oppose the ceasefire resolutions of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti City Councils, the Ann Arbor School Board, and the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners. We do not!

We support the release of hostages and call emphatically for a permanent ceasefire. The past four months have made one reality abundantly clear: there is no military solution to this crisis. Most of the hostages who were returned, were returned as a result of diplomacy, not through military actions. At the time of writing this letter, military action has led to at least 30 Israeli hostages dying in captivity, with several confirmed killed by the IDF. 29,000 Palestinians have been killed, including 13,000 children.

We are concerned that the Israeli government, a proclaimed Jewish state, has not centered the Jewish values of b'tselem elohim, that we are all created in the image of HaShem. Nor has it centered pikuach nefesh, that the preservation of human life must come before all else. Distressingly, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor pledges its full support to the collective punishment Israel is imposing on Palestinians.

The war continues to have devastating impacts. Of the 2.2 million Palestinians in Gaza, more than 85% have been forced to flee their homes into crowded refugee camps without access to food, clean water, or medicine, surrounded by the inescapable stench of decaying bodies. Palestinians continue to live in constant fear for their lives, as Israel aims for "maximum damage" over accuracy, not knowing whether they will be indiscriminately bombed or shot by the Israeli military.

The Jewish community of Washtenaw County is vibrant and varied in our backgrounds, beliefs, and practices. It is our hope that through the force of the signatures on this document, you consider more accurately representing this community. Do not collapse our authentic voices into reflexive advocacy and fundraising for Israel. We call for the Israeli government to abide by the international laws which were enacted after the Holocaust, and which prohibit collective punishment, civilian targeting, and use of famine as a weapon.

We adamantly believe that Jewish Israeli and Palestinian safety are not mutually exclusive, but are closely intertwined. Lasting peace will only be achieved when everyone — both Israelis and Palestinians — has access to safety, dignity, and self-determination. We claim recognition that this life affirming stance is based on strong Jewish values. We claim respect as fellow stewards of our faith. We ask you to join us in calling for a permanent ceasefire.

Kate Levin, co-author, If Not Now Ann Arbor Ceasefire Circle

Jackie Heymann, co-author, If Not Now Ann Arbor Ceasefire Circle

Stephanie Rosen, co-author, If Not Now Ann Arbor Ceasefire Circle

Merci Decker, co-author, If Not Now Ann Arbor Ceasefire Circle

Michael Appel, BIC
Rebecca Beilinson, UMich
Kira Berman, AARC
Gary Boren
Benjamin Ben-Baruch, AARC
Tara Cohen, AARC
Hannah Davis
Oscar Dixon-Epstein, age 11
Leora Druckman, AARC
Alexa Eisenberg, UMich
Joy Wolfe Ensor, TBE
Rebecca Epstein, Shamati
Deborah Field, AARC,
Zeitouna Shifra Epstein, BIC
Sally Fink, AARC
Deborah Fisch, AARC
Gregory Fox
Arline Geronimus, UMich
Leonore Mohill Gerstein, BIC
Thea Glicksman
Deb Gordon-Gurfinke, TBE
Carla Grayson
Janet Greenhut, AARC
Elli Gurfinkel, TBE
Alan Eliyahu Haber HaLevi, AARC
Odile Hugonot Haber
Idelle Hammond-Sass, AARC
Gloria Helfand
Marley Higbee, AARC
Miriam Hitchcock, TBE
Aaron Jackson
Rebecca Kanner
Robin Kaplan
Donna Rich Kaplowitz
Andrew Kaplowitz
Danny Kaplowitz
Pam Kisch
Molly Kleinman, Bend the Arc
Martha Kransdorf, BIC
Deb Kraus
Claudia Kraus Piper, AARC
Ruth Kraut, BIC
Stephen Landau
Clare Lauer, JCLP alumna
Carol Levin, BIC, AARC
Roi Livne, UMich
Maddy Mayer, Therapist
Laura McMahon, EMU
Harvey Michaels, BIC
Adrianne Neff, AARC
Evelyn Neuhaus, AARC
Judah Perillo, UMich
Clare Pritchard
SR
Ellen Rabinowitz
Patricia Ressler-Billion
Jessamyn Ressler-Mearlender
Amy Rosenberg, AARC
Diane Rosenblum
Polly Rosenwaike, UMich
Anita Rubin-Meiller, AARC
Steven Schiff, BIC
Mark Schneyer, AARC
Justin Schott
Ellen C. Schwartz, BIC
David Scobey
Pam Shore, AARC
Michael Simon, BIC
Ariane Smith, TBE
Michael Spaeth
Danny Steinmetz
Lauren Tatarsky
Denise Thal
Cilla Tomas, TBE
Carol Ullmann, AARC
Ken Wachsberger, TBE
Roberta Walker
Charles Weaver, BIC, AAOM
Lisa Wexler, AARC
Laurie White, AARC
Rebecca White
Lauren Zinn, AARC

JFS uses community art to highlight the experiences of older adults

By Rebecca Nieubuurt, JFS congregation based social worker

Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County (JFS) is seeking older adults, aged 60 and over, interested in sharing their experience of aging in Washtenaw County through a community art project. JFS is utilizing PhotoVoice, an artistic expression model, which uses a social justice lens to cast a light on the experiences of the participants. "PhotoVoice believes that everybody should have the opportunity to represent themselves and tell their own story" (photovoice.org). The PhotoVoice model does this by utilizing ethical photography and accompanying narrative to amplify individual voices and strip away stereotypes. The goal of PhotoVoice projects is to deliver positive social change by sharing with the world the lived experience of individual people.

The PhotoVoice model has been successfully adopted by communities all over the world. From a group home in Ireland during the height of the pandemic, to young engineers in Ghana working to bring their village into the 21st century, photography can show the public how the individual person sees the world. Each photograph is accompanied by a short narrative explaining why the person chose to take that photo. A young man, attending a school in Northern Australia that serves a predominately Australian First Peoples community, chose to photograph a stray dog that accompanies him on his walk home from school. To caption the photo the boy writes,

"Jax knows he shouldn't be at school but all his people are here. He has 100% attendance. I don't know how many times we've locked him out of the yard but he's always waiting for us. I leant down to take a photo of him just as he reached up to try and lick me. He's not my dog but I can't imagine not having him lying on the verandah, blocking the door while he waits for recess and dropped sandwiches."

The photo of Jax tells a story of its own and the boy's narrative opens the story to his unique perspective. Rather than a photographer entering the school and photographing kids in classrooms or playing in the yard, the children themselves are tasked with choosing what they want the world to see. This form of ethical photography is a direct response to decades of voyeuristic photojournalism that has largely been the visual source of information on marginalized groups and small communities.

In the fall of 2023, JFS adopted the PhotoVoice model for their Refugee Voices project. With the help of professional photographer, Amanda Lauchu of Amanda Mae Photography, a dozen refugees agreed to be JFS VOICE Creators and share their experience as new Americans in the Refugee Voices project. The participants chose to photograph their entrepreneurial endeavors to make their way in America. Lauchu spent time with each Creator in a location of their choice and together they discussed the creator's values and how they would like to express those values through photography. In the photo [to the right] Esperance is showing her work in textiles. Lauchu showcases Esperance in her element, but the subject of the photograph is the act of creation. For her narrative Esperance says:

"When I sew, I am happy. I tell myself let me do something. I am a mom, I have a family, let me do for my family. I have to do something to get something in my hand. I teach my daughter, and others, if you have scissors, needle, you need to do something."

The viewer can see the beauty of her craft in the photograph and the narrative conveys her passion for her work. When asked about their experience with Refugee Voices, creators responded, "It's important to show who we are," "I am proud of the pictures," and "I loved Mandy, she made the process easy." Creators reported a joyful process, even if the subject matter was serious or sad in nature.

This spring, Amanda Mae Photography has agreed to partner with JFS once more, this time with WISE Aging Services for their WISE Voices project. WISE Voices aims to highlight the experience of older adults in the community. WISE Voices creators will work with Mandy Lauchu to identify an aspect of aging that they want to share with their community. It can be any part of their lives or experience. Participants may want to answer the questions posed by the project: How do you maintain connection to community? What are your challenges? What parts of your life feed your soul? What are the socio/psychological effects of aging in America? Or they may have a unique question which they want to answer through this work.

Much like the dog Jax in the Australian PhotoVoice project, a pair of glasses can tell an entire story of their own. Maybe the creator is focusing on their vision impairment or perhaps their continued desire to read as much as possible. A WISE Voices creator may want to share their experience with public transportation, on which they rely to get them to appointments and activities. Someone else may want to show their work in the community or efforts to stay fit. Each photograph will embody the experience of the individual participant, who will then write their own short narrative to accompany the photo they chose and inform the audience's gaze on their subject.

No study, photographic, scientific, or otherwise, is complete until it's been shared with others. In that spirit, JFS will display the WISE Voice project in an outdoor exhibit and an indoor gallery viewing at the end of the summer. These exhibitions will be open to the public and ensure that those WISE Voices are heard. Details on viewings will be forthcoming at www.jfsannarbor.org.

Whatever your perspective, you can be a part of WISE Voices. If you are a person over 60 years old, we urge you to participate. Especially needed are older adults who live in 48197 and 48198 zip codes, so that the project represents our entire county. Please contact rebeccan@jfsannarbor.org or (734) 219-5354 to learn more and schedule your session with Amanda Mae Photography. Tell your part in the story of aging in Washtenaw County: Be a WISE Voices creator.

Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County is a social services agency offering support through WISE Aging Services, THRIVE Counseling, Refugee Resettlement, Nutrition Services, and much more. Please visit www.jfsannarbor.org for more

Nourishing Traditions: Passover senior meals and culturally sensitive solutions for Jewish food insecurity

By Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County

In the realm of addressing food insecurity, cultural sensitivity is paramount. For the Jewish community, maintaining dietary traditions is not just about sustenance but is also a connection to heritage. Access to culturally and nutritionally appropriate food is a basic and critical need, equally important across all incomes, religious beliefs, and age groups. Jewish Family Services (JFS) in Ann Arbor has emerged as a vital lifeline, playing a pivotal role in ensuring that the Jewish elderly and other vulnerable members of our community are able to enjoy culturally appropriate and kosher meals in the most dignified and accommodating way. JFS' commitment to addressing the unique needs of this community is evident through various initiatives, making them a unique and unparalleled resource.

WISE at the J

JFS's WISE at the J program operates as Washtenaw County's only Kosher Senior Cafe, providing a welcoming space for Jewish seniors to gather, socialize, and enjoy nutritious kosher meals. WISE at the J not only addresses the nutritional needs of seniors but also fosters a sense of community and belonging.

Yad Ezra Monthly Food Deliveries

Recognizing that food insecurity is an ongoing challenge, JFS extends its support through monthly food deliveries in collaboration with Yad Ezra, a kosher food bank, located in Berkley. These deliveries ensure that Jewish seniors receive a consistent supply of kosher groceries, helping to alleviate the stress of grocery shopping and meal planning.

Kosher Meals on Wheels (MOW)

For those seniors who may face mobility challenges, JFS offers Kosher Meals on Wheels, ensuring that nutritious and kosher meals are delivered directly to their doorstep. This service not only addresses the physical limitations of seniors but also allows them to maintain their cultural and dietary practices.

JFS Holiday Meal Initiatives

JFS goes above and beyond in ensuring that no Jewish senior feels excluded during special occasions. During Hanukkah, they provide delectable latkes, bringing the warmth of tradition to seniors' homes. However, Passover holds a particularly significant place in the hearts of the Jewish community, and JFS rises to the occasion by providing a week of Kosher for Passover meals to seniors.

In the tapestry of addressing food insecurity, the work of JFS in Washtenaw County is a meaningful example of how cultural sensitivity can be seamlessly integrated into service delivery. As we embrace the efforts of JFS in meeting the diverse needs of Jewish seniors, we want to celebrate the caring spirit of our community and the many helping hands (volunteers, donors, family caregivers, etc.) that make these vitally important programs possible. ■

JFS
Jewish Family Services

Passover Seder con't from pg 1

to use during their seders at the beginning the first major holiday since Hamas attacked Israel on 7 — an assault that itself pierced the observance of a Jewish holiday, Simchat Torah. (The October 7 attack reportedly had originally been planned for the first night of Passover last year.)

Many seder tables will have empty seats representing October 7 victims, hostages and soldiers who are unable to return home for the holiday. But the seminary sought to provide rabbis and their communities with other ways to adapt the ancient tradition to the current moment.

"The Passover holiday is really one in which families celebrate on their own," said Rabbi Arie Hasit, Schechter's associate dean. "It will be the job of rabbis and community leaders to frame Purim [the festive holiday later this month], because the ritual aspects of it are largely going to happen in the synagogue, or in the Jewish community. But Passover is going to happen in the home. So our job right now, which is so significant, is to help people navigate how to prepare."

Among the supplement's passages is an addition to the seminal "Four Questions" recited during the seder, which ask, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" The added text aims to reflect the feelings of seder attendees this year.

"On all other nights, we think that we have answers. Tonight, we all just stay silent," says the passage, which is in Hebrew. "On all other nights, we remember, sing and cry. … On this night, we only cry."

The initiative is one of several underway to adapt the Passover holiday for a different crisis in the Jewish story.

Rabbi Menachem Creditor, the scholar-in-residence at UJA-Federation of New York, is working on a haggadah supplement with the Academy of Jewish Religion, a pluralistic rabbinic school in Yonkers, New York.

"To talk about liberation when our family is not yet whole again is very hard, and our own tears will mix with the maror," Creditor told JTA, using the Hebrew word for the seder plate's bitter herbs. "We won't need the haggadah's usual explanation of what bitterness feels like."

Creditor said AJR's CEO and academic dean Ora Horn Prouser approached him with the idea of creating a Passover supplement about the ongoing Israel-Hamas war. They put out a call for submissions — prayers, essays, artwork and other reflections — and received dozens of responses that will be edited into a resource AJR will self-publish and sell on Amazon. Parts of the final product will also be available for free on the seminary's website.

"This is a supplement that very directly addresses our current time and provides a community of thinking that we can bring into our seders," Horn Prouser told JTA.

In addition to "Dayenu," Creditor and Horn Prouser pointed to one particular piece of the Passover text with new resonance this year: "Vehi Sheamda," the prayer that warns that in every generation, a new enemy will attempt to defeat the Jewish people. This year's crisis conjures new ideas about both the enemy and how to vanquish it, Creditor said.

"The language in the seder, in the haggadah, is that God will save us," Creditor said. "But Zionism represents a very different religious posture, which is: We will save us.

"Unfortunately, the first part of the paragraph remains true and was amplified horribly on October 7," Creditor continued. "The second half of it must be true through the connection that we have, as a Jewish people throughout the world, strengthening our homeland."

The Passover initiatives in both Israel and the United States add to a long tradition of haggadah iterations and supplements that layer present-day issues onto the ancient text, from those centered around Soviet Jewry to more recent examples like additions about the Ukraine war and the pandemic. Last year, some families left an empty seat at their seder table in honor of Evan Gershkovich, the Jewish Wall Street Journal reporter who remains jailed in Russia.

"The haggadah is something that developed and, and as modern Jews who are dealing with issues of the same themes that have come up again and again in our history, we need to figure out how to make those themes accessible, relevant, real and useful," said Rabbi Sara Cohen, a Schechter alumna who helped plan the seminary's conference in Israel.

Cohen, who lives on Kibbutz Ketura near the southern port city of Eilat, where the population swelled with war evacuees, said the text offers an important opportunity for the kind of emotional reckoning that is desperately needed in a battered Israel and Jewish world.

"We don't necessarily think of holidays as a time for processing trauma, but because Passover is the first major holiday since [October 7] and because it's a holiday that the story of which talks about national trauma and redemption, one of the questions is, 'What is redemption in our day, and are we feeling redeemed, are we feeling free?'" Cohen said. "When you're brought face to face with the holiday that brings up these issues, hopefully we won't just pass them by but we'll think about how it's relevant in our lives today."

She added, "We have to pay attention to the desire to process the trauma and the framework that our tradition gives us for processing it."

Cohen wrote the additions to the Four Questions that are included in the Schechter supplement. Other supplement passages invoke more explicit war imagery and the sense of bereavement felt by many across Israel. Herskovitz's entry is an interpretation of the core Passover text suggesting that each Jew see themselves as though they personally left Egypt.

Hasit acknowledged that beginning the project in early February was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it provided Schechter with plenty of time to collect responses and work with Herskovitz to put together a Passover resource ahead of the holiday, which this year begins April 22.

On the other hand, the war is evolving daily, and nobody knows what the status of the conflict, or the hostages, will be by late April. But Hasit said no matter what happens, the trauma of October 7 will need to be addressed at the seder table.

"We know that [Passover's] coming, and we know that it's going to be different," he said. "We know that it's going to include processing everything that has happened since October 7. And no matter what happens tomorrow, and the day after that, none of that is going to change."

Horn Prouser shared a similar sentiment. "Even if our prayers are all answered, our community is feeling trauma," she said. "The issues to discuss, we still need time to process them."

Herskovitz said he views the Passover effort as a cognate of his Holocaust remembrance work, in which he emphasizes the importance of creating fresh, personal materials that people can connect with.

"I think the same exact thing is what has to be done in Pesach this year," he said, using the Hebrew word for Passover. "You cannot use the same text and the same ideas that you used for years and years because this year is so radically different. And to go back to the old text, the old ideas, is basically making it irrelevant." ■

Chapter 9 Project

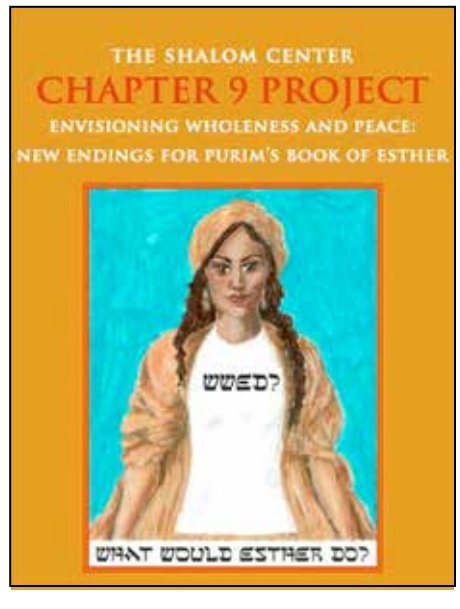
By Jackie Hajdenberg, originally for the JTA

Like many synagogues, Rabbi Nate DeGroot's California congregation had a tradition of accompanying the annual recitation of the Purim story with rowdy humor. But when the storytelling arrived at the penultimate chapter, the jokes stopped and a monitor that had displayed Purim-themed memes went dark.

That's because Chapter 9 of the story, recounted in a book of the Bible called Megillat Esther, contains a vibe shift of its own. After eight chapters recounting how the Jews of ancient Shushan in Persia evaded a plot to kill them, the story turns to revenge. The Jews kill more than 75,000 people from the kingdom.

As the associate director of the Shalom Center, a 40-year-old progressive Jewish activist group, DeGroot is helping lead an effort to "build a national movement of sacred justice that is rooted in the Jewish calendar." So even in October, shortly after Hamas' attack on Israel, he and his colleagues started envisioning ways to adapt Purim for the moment.

"We wanted to invite dreamers and thinkers and seekers and writers to imagine new endings to the Purim story," he said.



"What is a different Chapter 9 that would produce a different outcome? What is a Chapter 9 that could center peace, that could center the dignity and divinity of all of life and center nonviolence as a response?"

The result of the Chapter 9 Project is a set of texts that DeGroot hopes congregations might read in addition to the traditional text on Purim, which this year took place starting the evening of March 23.

In one submission, a call for revenge is quelled by a response from Queen Esther: "Blood begets blood until Shushan drowns in it. What will safeguard the security of Shushan? What will stop the cycle of blood?"

In another, the story ends with feasting and merriment that erases symbols of violence. In this version, written by Rabbi Tamara Cohen, "the trees for hanging became trees for climbing," the "foolish kings turned their scepters into pogo sticks," "the masks became mirrors," and "in every home in Persia there was light and joy and the dawning awareness that each and every person, whatever their age, gender, religion, or lineage, is an olam katan, a precious, miniature world to be nurtured and treasured."

A third, by Lipman Kanfer Foundation for Living Torah president Dan Libenson, preserves virtually all of the traditional Chapter 9 — but inserts a line revealing that the murder of 75,000 had taken place only in a dream of Mordecai, the leader of the Jews of Shushan.

Rabbi Arthur Waskow, the Shalom Center's 90-year-old founder, writes in an introduction to the compendium that he had long worried that the violent impulses chronicled in Chapter 9 would prevail among the Jewish people — and that, in his view, they are now doing so in Gaza. Rethinking the Purim text, he said, offers an alternative.

"We can uproot the notion that Chapter 9 of the Scroll of Esther reports factual history or that it should be imitated by the present or any government of the modern State of Israel," Waskow writes.

The idea that the megillah contains a record of gratuitous violence in response to an antisemitic attack is not universally accepted.

"A lot of folks point to Chapter 9," said Rabbi Stu Halpern, senior advisor to the provost and deputy director of the Straus Center at Yeshiva University who is also the author of Esther in America, about the megillah's influence on the United States. "But there's no verse in the Bible that says that the Jews in return actually did slaughter women and children from the other side. So I think that's important to note." (A verse

continued to page 26

Rosh Chodesh with AARC

By Rabbi Gabrielle Pescador

Rosh Chodesh is a festival upon which we celebrate the new moon and beginning of each month of the Hebrew calendar. While still in Egypt, right before the Exodus, the Israelites were commanded to mark the months of the year and create a Jewish calendar based on the lunar cycle.

Today, however, Jewish time is determined by the positions of both the sun and the moon, since the lunar and solar calendars do not exactly line up. To make sure that Jewish holidays are observed in their proper season and to keep the two calendars closer in alignment, the rabbis created a system with seven leap years occurring within a 19-year cycle. On a Jewish leap year, a full month is added to the calendar. That is why this year we have two months of Adar (Adar I and Adar II).

Observing Rosh Chodesh is more than just a way of marking time. It is a monthly holiday with special observances that provide an opportunity for personal growth. The waxing and waning of the moonlight reminds us of the ebb and flow of life, and that life is full of change. In celebrating a glimmer of light and moving from darkness to light, we embrace the possibility of hope and renewal.

In the Jewish mystical text, Sefer Yetzirah, we learn that each month of the Hebrew calendar is associated with a special quality or power of perception. Following this framework, one could say that the Jewish calendar is inviting us to develop 12 senses (not just the common five). There is some debate among the rabbis over what some of those senses actually are. In The Spiral of Time by Rabbi Dovber Pinson, they are listed as: speech, thought, walking, vision, hearing, action, touch, smell, sleep, anger, taste, and laughter.

I am attracted to this psycho-spiritual approach of experiencing Rosh Chodesh through the 12 senses, as it provides yet another tool in Jewish tradition for doing teshuvah (returning to our essential goodness) and refining the character. The High Holy Days are not the only time for doing this kind of work. Every holiday, Shabbat, and Rosh Chodesh has something profound to teach us, not just about our Jewish tradition, but also about ourselves. The same can be said of the daily liturgy which can help us attend to being more forgiving, discerning, kind, and grateful, and to bringing peace and healing to the world.

Rosh Chodesh marks the beginning of a monthlong practice of spiritual refinement. On the new moon we attend to a particular spiritual quality and continue working on it for the entire month. By the time the next Rosh Chodesh rolls around, we have hopefully become better versions of ourselves, and are ready to begin the process all over again with the next spiritual quality of the calendar cycle.

On Tuesday, April 9, we will be celebrating Rosh Chodesh Nisan, the new moon of the month of Passover. The spiritual quality for Nisan is "speech" which asks us to pay closer attention to our choice of words and to express ourselves with more compassion and discernment. The focus of the month also asks us to speak our truth, which includes the truth of our suffering and the suffering that we witness in this world. When we speak the truth from the heart, with clarity and compassion, we walk the path of healing, redemption, and freedom, and align with the message of Passover.

At the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC), we celebrate Rosh Chodesh every month with a morning minyan (service) and explore ways of developing the "sense" of the month and deepening a connection to that sense through prayers, kavanot, meditations, and the Torah portion of the week. The minyan meets on Zoom each month. Please join us for heartfelt davening, song and learning, and harp music.

To receive the link to the Rosh Chodesh minyan, please email info@aarecon.org.

AARC events in April

April 9

Rosh Chodesh Nisan Minyan on Zoom. 9 a.m.

April 13

Second Saturday Morning Shabbat Service. This is a hybrid Shabbat Service led by our Rabbi, Gabrielle Pescador, at the JCC and on Zoom. 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

April 17

Pop in with Rav Gabrielle on Zoom. 7 p.m.

April 26

Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat. This is a hybrid service led by Rabbi Gabrielle Pescador in person at the JCC and on Zoom. Everyone is welcome! 6:30 p.m.

For more information about services or events or to receive Zoom links, please email: aarcgillian@gmail.com. Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation website: aarecon.org ■

AARC listening circles

By Anita Rubin-Meiller

In an effort to nurture connection and support among community members, the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation held a successful two-hour forum titled "Listening to Each Other as We Navigate This Moment." The event was held to assist in the congregation's aim to navigate together through this critical moment, a time of crisis and conflict stemming from the ongoing war in Israel and Gaza.

A committee of five members created the event around these intentions: to speak with care for others; to share the responsibility to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak and be heard; and to listen deeply.

The event opened with a description of our framework, acknowledging that thoughts, feelings, and reactions about what is unfolding in Israel, Palestine, and Gaza are strongly influenced by varied generational attachments to Israel and Zionism, personal experiences of living in or visiting Israel, personal connections to family and friends who are being impacted on a daily basis by the ongoing war, what information we take in, etc.

A brief, guided meditation helping the attendees center in the heart also grounded the intentions for the sharing. The 32 participants who attended the event were divided into two circles. In the space of 90 minutes, there were three rounds of sharing. In the first round, members introduced themselves and named the feelings they were experiencing. The second round of sharing gave each person time to elaborate and share more specifically how they have been impacted by events since the October 7 attack by Hamas. The final round was a wrap up, a time to share any last thoughts, including how it felt to participate. Several members indicated that they had had misgivings about attending and were glad they did. Most members indicated they felt safe and heard and appreciated a venue that was not an exchange of competing opinions. The event received praise from almost everyone and some expressed hope that there would be additional opportunities for this kind of sharing.

The forum helped to encourage an empathetic understanding and acceptance of the varied experiences and emotions shared. It was a heartening testament to the power of open communication and the value of connection and community in these challenging times. ■

Jewish climate action in Washtenaw County

By Ari Cohen, Adamah Detroit

Adamah Detroit (formerly Hazon Detroit) cultivates vibrant Jewish life — in deep connection with the Earth — through Jewish environmental education, leadership development, and climate action programs and initiatives. Through our stewardship of the Adamah Detroit Network we support an extraordinary community of local Jewish organizations working together to center environmental stewardship as a foundational Jewish value in our region. We do that work through spirited holiday and educational programming, building the field of Jewish environmental education through trainings and professional development, and supporting Jewish organizations in climate action through our coordination of the Jewish Climate Leadership Coalition. Now more than ever, it is critical that our community come together around a strong, collective Jewish response to the climate crisis.

In September of 2022, Adamah launched the Jewish Climate Leadership Coalition, the largest action to date seeking to decarbonize North American Jewish Institutions. At the time of launch, many of the largest Jewish umbrella organizations in the world signed onto our founding statement acknowledging the climate crisis and pledging to take action. Since then, more than 300 Jewish institutions across North American have signed the pledge to get involved and join this movement. In Michigan, 12 Jewish Institutions have signed this pledge, including Congregation Beth Israel and Temple Beth Emeth of Ann Arbor.

On Tu B'Shvat 2024, Coalition member institutions released the first round of individualized climate action plans, laying out thousands of climate goals for Jewish institutions in the year ahead. Planned actions include nature-based Hebrew school curriculum, environmental advocacy, solar installations, composting, energy efficiency, and meat-free meals. The array of climate action taking place in Jewish institutions across North America — and right here in our own backyard — is diverse, impactful, and inspirational.

In Pirkei Avot we read "you are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it." This is especially true in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges such as the climate crisis. Our Jewish community cannot solve this crisis alone, but we can play our part. We can lead by example and show the world what community-level climate leadership looks like. We can recognize the expensive nature of climate inaction and resolve to avoid those costs. We can talk — Jewishly — about the climate crisis and encourage others to do the same.

At Adamah Detroit, we continue to be inspired every day by the individuals driving this important work forward. Lay leaders, clergy, staff, and many others are all pitching in to make our shared spaces more sustainable. We are incredibly grateful to be in community with such passionate people.

One member of Congregation Beth Israel stated, "Our climate action activities have helped our members explore the mandate of our rich Jewish tradition to protect the earth. Our accomplishments include a synagogue-wide energy audit, a whole-system design for energy-efficient electrification of our HVAC and kitchen equipment, motivating our teens to write a "Psalm for the Earth," 100% compostable weekly Kiddush, and a community garden. Adamah has provided critical insight and direction, startup funds, and access to other like-minded organizations. We wholeheartedly encourage other congregations to join us in our work to save the planet for future generations. This is part and parcel of all our Jewish aspirations."

If you would like to learn more about how your Jewish institution can get involved with the Jewish Climate Leadership Coalition or to find the latest information and event offerings from Adamah Detroit, visit Adamah.org. ■

Main Event photos on page 11, clockwise from top left:

2024 Main Event Co-Chairs are (L-R): Peter and Jennifer VanBeck and Marilyn and Leonard Kirsch, with Aaron Dworkin center; Federation Board President Jessica 'Decky' Alexander and Communications and Development Manager Rachel Wall; -Joan Lowenstein and Jonathan Trobe receiving the 2nd annual Pillar Award; Headliner Aaron Dworkin with Judy Cohen; (L-R) Susan Fisher, Linda and Ron Benson, Cantor Regina Hayut, (standing) Annie Wolock, Fran Stacey. ■

Over 100 young adults gather for MEGA Shabbat

By Ariella Hoffman-Peterson, NEXTGen A2 Coordinator at the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

Earlier this winter, NEXTGen of Greater Ann Arbor partnered with University of Michigan Hillel's JGrad group to host a MEGA Shabbat dinner for the 20s- and 30s-aged Jewish community of the Ann Arbor area.

Over 100 attendees joined, representing a variety of partner groups, including Maize and Jew (from the Ross Business School), the Jewish Medical Student Association, the Jewish Communal Leadership Program, and the Jewish Law Student Association. Attendees participated in a "speed schmooze" to meet new friends and celebrated the national Shabbat of Love initiative together.

2024 was NEXTGen A2's second annual MEGA Shabbat. The group has high hopes to continue the tradition for many years to come.

NEXTGen A2 is a program of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor. To learn more or get involved, visit JewishAnnArbor.org/engagement/NEXTGenA2 or email jyp@jewishannarbor.org. ■

Twenty-third Ann Arbor Film Festival May 5–May 19

By Nat Bension, Director of Cultural Arts and Education at the JCC of Greater Ann Arbo

The 23rd Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival kicks off Sunday, May 5, at the State Theatre! Join the JCC and our community partners for two weeks of new Jewish cinema from all over the world. Visit jccannarbor.org/film-festival for updates on this year's streamings, screenings, and live discussions across Southeast Michigan. This is Noemi Herzig's final season directing the festival; please join the AAJFF committee and JCC staff at any of this year's events to wish her well on her retirement!

In addition to the partner organizations, committee members, and volunteers behind this annual program, the Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival relies on the generous support of individual community members and local families to bring substantive, engaging cultural arts programs to Washtenaw County year after year. For information on becoming a sponsor of this year's Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival, please visit jccannarbor.org/film-festival or contact Ariella Monson at (734) 971-0990 or ariellamonson@jccannarbor.org. ■

Jewish Federation 2024 Main Event

On March 13, 250 members of the greater Ann Arbor Jewish community gathered at Washtenaw Community College, plus another 75 watching the virtual livestream, for a moving and uplifting evening. Aaron Dworkin, author of The Poetjournalist, headlined the event with a presentation about his life as a Black, White, Jewish, Jehovah's Witness adoptee, through poetry and music. In addition, the Second Annual Pillar Award was presented to Jonathan Trobe and Joan Lowenstein for their years of exemplary service to the community in the areas of Federation's guiding principles: Philanthropy, Engagement, and Convening. The event raised over $80,000 for the Federation's 2024 Annual Community Campaign, to enrich Jewish life locally, in Israel, and around the world.■

In every generation, we carry on our traditions.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor wishes you and your loved ones a happy Passover.

Jewish Federation
of Greater Ann Arbor

Cantor Regina Hayut: A Teacher

By Robin Little, third in a four-part series about Cantor Regina Hayut

People may well ask: What does a cantor do besides sing at services and direct a choir? In the case of Cantor Regina Hayut, the answer is: teach, facilitate, and support many adult study groups at Temple Beth Emeth. These include: Women's Torah study, Queer Torah study, Cantor's book club, Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle, Youth B'Mitzvah, and Adult B'nai Mitzvah. Let's look more closely at some specific examples.

The Women's Torah study group started right before the pandemic in 2020 and immediately shifted to Zoom. It continues to meet on Zoom, allowing for participation for those who live outside of Washtenaw County, including one member who lives in California. It is a diverse group in terms of age and life experiences. Similar to other Torah study groups, the participants study the weekly parshah, the Torah portion that is read and chanted in synagogues around the world. What makes the TBE group special is that it is led by a woman, Cantor Regina, with women studying together, learning, and discussing from the perspective of women. Discussions are wide-ranging, with no topic off limits. Everyone has a voice that is valued. Even though the group has been meeting for several years, each time they revisit the weekly Parshah, they find new perspectives and insights.

Another women's group is the Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle. This group also started right before the pandemic in 2020, but it meets in person (and on Zoom), aligning with the first day of the new moon. It is co-facilitated by Trina Fuller, Linda Greene, and Regina. Each session starts with a theme (e.g., joy, light) or question, a piece of scripture from Torah, Talmud, or a Kabbalistic teaching, and music. This group explores anything and everything. It is a comforting and safe space for women to talk and share.

Ari Smith, who chairs the TBE Religious Practices committee, facilitates the Queer Torah Study Group. This group meets weekly, in person and on Zoom. Similar to Women's Torah study (or the weekly Shabbat Torah study facilitated by Rabbi Whinston), it revolves around the weekly parshah, but from a queer perspective. This group came to be because of the advocacy of LGBTQ+ congregants and the value TBE places on inclusivity.

According to Ari: "I really struggle to articulate just how much it means to me, as a queer person living in America right now, that I have the full-throated support of the clergy at TBE in outreach to the LGBTQ+ community. Regina has done everything from tech support to advice on how to run meetings to running the service for Trans Day of Visibility Shabbat. She just wants to help others find a home here the way I did." Ari, a convert to Judaism, is currently studying to be a bat mitzvah in Regina's Adult B'nai Mitzvah class.

Trina Fuller was in the last Adult B'nai Mitzvah class that studied during the pandemic and graduated in 2022. She describes her experience in the class with Regina this way: "She was super flexible. Cantor Hayut gracefully navigated between all manner of religious questions and our collective anxieties. No one's insecurity was insurmountable. Each class participant came from a different place (an Orthodox home, a Catholic home, or no religious upbringing). Regina spent extra time with me, and others, to make sure that we were all prepared and ready to lead our service and chant Torah."

The Cantor's book club (which Regina wrote about in the January WJN), a spinoff from the past adult b'nai mitzvah class, does a deep dive into the book selected, reading only 50–60 pages a week (no spoilers allowed for those who read ahead!). This is a very different format from most book groups that read one book a month. It allows for extensive exploration of the text (similar to Torah study). It started out as a Biblical book club, reading fiction based on Biblical or Talmudic tests. Currently, the group is reading stories about displacement and immigration. Although it never started out as a women's book group, it has turned out that way.

And this is not surprising for Deborah Katz, a longtime TBE member and participant in both the Women's Torah study group and the book club. "One of Regina's most significant contributions to TBE has been empowering women of all ages to be engaged in the life of the congregation. There are women on the bimah chanting Torah, women studying Torah, and women learning to be b'nai mitzvah." What an amazing gift! ■

TBE events in April

Events and services are both in person and/or virtual. Please see www.templebethemeth.org for full details, location information, and links.

Tot & Elementary Shabbat Service & Dinner
Fridays at 5:45 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut and Rabbi Whinston to celebrate Shabbat with fun activities, stories, songs, and age-appropriate learning for children ages 0–5 and children ages 5–10. Registration requested.

Shabbat Service
Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday Shabbat service
Saturdays at 10 a.m.

Weekday morning blessings
Weekdays at 9:15 a.m.
Join Rabbi Whinston each weekday morning for a short service of song, poetry, and meditation.

Afternoon blessings
Thursdays at 3 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut for an intimate short service.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah
Sundays at 2:30 p.m.
Contact Cantor Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org for details and with questions.

Women's Torah study
Mondays at 7:30 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut in an in-depth study and lively discussion of the week's Torah portion. This year, the group will focus on exploring passages that have informed rituals of modern Jewish life.

Twenty-five-minute mindfulness with Jewish spiritual director Linda Greene
Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.
Zoom room opens at 8:15 a.m. for optional check-in. Blessing and intention setting 8:30–8:35 a.m. Meditate 8:35–9 a.m. Start your day centered and connected.

Queer Torah Study
Tuesdays at 7 p.m. (No study on Tuesday, April 23)
Join us in person or via Zoom for a discussion of queer themes in the weekly Torah portion! Led by Ari Marcotte & Ari Smith. Guest leaders welcome! Contact Ari M (ari.j.marcotte@gmail.com) for more information.

WTBE Gift Shop
Wednesdays 4–6 p.m.
Fridays 6–7:30 p.m.
Washtenaw County's only Judaica Shop! Located in the Genesis building at 2309 Packard St., Ann Arbor.

Cantor's (Jewish) Book Club with Cantor Hayut
Thursdays at 11 a.m.
Join Cantor Hayut to read and discuss books of Jewish interest a few chapters at a time. This year, the book group will be reading primarily, although not exclusively, works by Israeli authors. For more information or questions, please contact Cantor Hayut.

Back Door Food Pantry
Thursdays, 4–7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner
Thursdays at 5 p.m.
Join Claire Weiner for a 40-minute meditation session.

Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Whinston
Fridays at 12 p.m.
Bring your lunch and learn with Rabbi Whinston during this informal and social gathering. We explore different ideas throughout the year with participants guiding our subjects.

Shabbat morning Torah study
Saturdays at 8:50 a.m.
Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion.

Bearing Witness: Finding Hope and Joy Travel to Israel Information Session.
Monday, April 1, 5 p.m.
Learn about this important women's mission to Israel from June 30–July 10, 2024. Led by Cantor Regina Hayut in honor of her retirement. Registration requested.

New Member Brunch
Sunday, April 7, 11 a.m. (off-site)
Join us for a new member brunch.

Community Commemoration
Sunday, April 7, 7:30 p.m.
Join the community in remembrance, solidarity, and hope for peace.

Rosh Chodesh Circle
Monday, April 8, 5:30 p.m.
In the TBE Chapel and available via Zoom.

WTBE Passover Sale
Friday, April 12, 11 a.m.
Sunday, April 14, 3 p.m.
Friday, April 19, 11 p.m.
Women of TBE's Annual Passover Sale. We offer everything you need for your seder, including seder plates, matzah & afikomen bags, haggadot, toys for the kids, hostess gifts, and holiday-inspired jewelry in addition to Judaica items.

Family Camp
Friday, April 12, 6:45 p.m.
Family Camp provides an opportunity for families to play and learn together, for students to reinforce and share some of what they are learning in the classroom, and most importantly, to strengthen ties among students and parents/caretakers.

Preparing for Passover & Young Families Seder
Sunay, April 14, 2 p.m.
The TBE Religious Practices Committee invites you to explore fresh ideas for your Seder or celebrate Pesach early with your young children. Gather new recipes, taste some Pesach treats, and enjoy some informal schmoozing time. End your visit by heading up to the WTBE Passover Sale where you can purchase anything you need for a meaningful and memorable Pesach.

Our African Safari: The big 5, 6 Jews, and 7 cameras
Sunday, April 14, 7:30 p.m.
Join us for stories, photos, and videos from our safari in Tanzania and Kenya.
Light refreshments will be served.

Bereavement Group
Tuesday, April 16, 4 p.m.
The group will have opportunities to share openly about their process of grieving and will also have topic-based readings to spark discussion.

Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Emerita Annie Rose
Tuesday, April 16, 7 p.m. and Thursday, April 18, 12 p.m.
Please come to our Tuesday night sessions OR our Thursday afternoon sessions. Registration is not required, but is helpful for our planning.

LGBTQ Shabbat Potluck
Friday, April 19, 6 p.m.
Join us for a Shabbat dinner and candle lighting with members of the local queer community! Bring a dish to share with others, make new friends, and let us know what you'd like to see in future queer programming!

Recovery Seder
Sunday, April 28, 4 p.m.
This unique Passover celebration will utilize a Haggadah with resonances of 12-Step program. Registration requested. ■

Cantor Emma Maier to join Temple Beth Emeth

By Jack Zaientz, chair, TBE cantor search committe

There is a lot of excitement at Temple Beth Emeth. Beginning this summer, Cantor Emma Maier will be assuming the position of cantor at Temple Beth Emeth previously held by TBE's beloved Cantor Regina Hayut, who is retiring after a decade of service to the Ann Arbor Reform Jewish synagogue. Cantor Maier currently serves as cantor, spiritual leader, and educator at The Village Temple in New York City's Greenwich Village neighborhood and is a member of the American Conference of Cantors.

"We are so excited to welcome Cantor Maier to Temple Beth Emeth and Ann Arbor," said TBE's Rabbi Josh Whinston. "Even from my first encounter with Cantor Maier, her inquisitive nature and thoughtfulness was clearly apparent. Once I heard Cantor Maier's voice, I was even more confident that our community would love her and that she would be a wonderful fit on our bimah."

Cantor Maier was ordained by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) where she was the recipient of numerous awards and honors including the Compassionate Cantor Prize by Reform Cantors of Chicago, the Cantor Edward R. Fogel - St. Louis Circle of Jewish Music Prize for Vocal Development, and Women of Reform Judaism Award. While attending HUC-JIR, she was an active member of the Worship Working Group, where she worked to shape and support t'filah culture. She is an accomplished choral singer and is looking forward to developing her choral conducting skills and leading Temple Beth Emeth's Kol Halev choir.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Emma was a member of Wilshire Boulevard Temple where she sang in the youth choir from elementary school through high school. After being the beneficiary of a robust Jewish education at Brawerman Elementary and Milken Community High School, Emma went on to attend Brandeis University where she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies (NEJS) with a minor in Religious Studies. She has performed in choirs and as a soloist at numerous venues — including the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles, the Metropolitan Opera, St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, and Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, among other venues.

"From our very first interactions it was clear that TBE was a special community," said Cantor Maier, "The cantorial search process was deeply intentional, everyone was so kind, and there was a palpable excitement in the air. Upon visiting Ann Arbor, all of my expectations and more were confirmed. I fell in love with the warm, welcoming, vibrant, and spirited community. I am elated and honored to be joining the TBE team and can't wait to continue getting to know this remarkable community. What a joy it will be to be your cantor!"

Cantor Maier's hire was the result of an eight-month search process led by TBE's Cantor Search Committee and, before that, a yearlong congregational information-gathering and planning process led by TBE's Transition Task Force. The knowledge-gathering process led to insights into TBE needs and aspirations that set the stage for the search. The search process involved defining the cantor job description and priorities, reviewing twelve cantor applications, and scheduling and conducting eleven Zoom interviews and three in person auditions and interviews. The Cantor Search Committee included Jack Zaientz (chair), Rabbi Josh Whinston, Jack Billi, Hugh Goodman, Sonya Lewis, Cathy Marshall, Tara Martin, Rosie Meisler, and Rebecca Schwartz. The committee was supported by TBE President Margaret Hannon, VP of Administration Melissa Simon, Executive Director Shannon Hall, Cantor Regina, the Kol Halev choir, the TBE Board of Trustees, and the TBE congregants and Ann Arbor community members who participated in the audition and interview process. ■

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8 PM

Earl Lee
Music
Director

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JFS Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County

DINNER with the Chef

Thursday, May 23, 2024
(additional dates coming soon!)

Join us for an extraordinary dining experience, crafted by a local chef. Indulge in a mouthwatering meal, accompanied by delightful drinks, and share in the joy of laughter with your dear friends at JFS's Shalom Kitchen and Food Pantry.

This event not only promises a fun-filled evening, but also supports a great cause as proceeds will benefit Nourish Nutrition Services.

DECADES DANCE

Thursday, June 6, 2024

Get ready to groove, twist, and boogie as we transport you through the ages at Jewish Family Services **FIRST-EVER Decades Dance.** Your partnership and support will not only guarantee a fantastic evening but also directly contribute to the enhancement of our Wise Older Adult Services programming.

WALK A MILE IN MY SHOES

Sunday, September 29, 2024

Join JFS on our annual fundraising walk in support of the diverse clients and community members who walk through our doors in need of help. Sponsoring Walk a Mile in My Shoes event directly supports JFS's Refugee Resettlement Programs.

Scan to view sponsorship opportunities

jfsannarbor.org

COMMUNITY COMMEMORATION

Six Months Since the October 7 Terror Attack

SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 2024 | 7:30 PM

LOCATION: TEMPLE BETH EMETH

Join the community in remembrance, solidarity, and hope for peace.

For more information & to register, visit JewishAnnArbor.org

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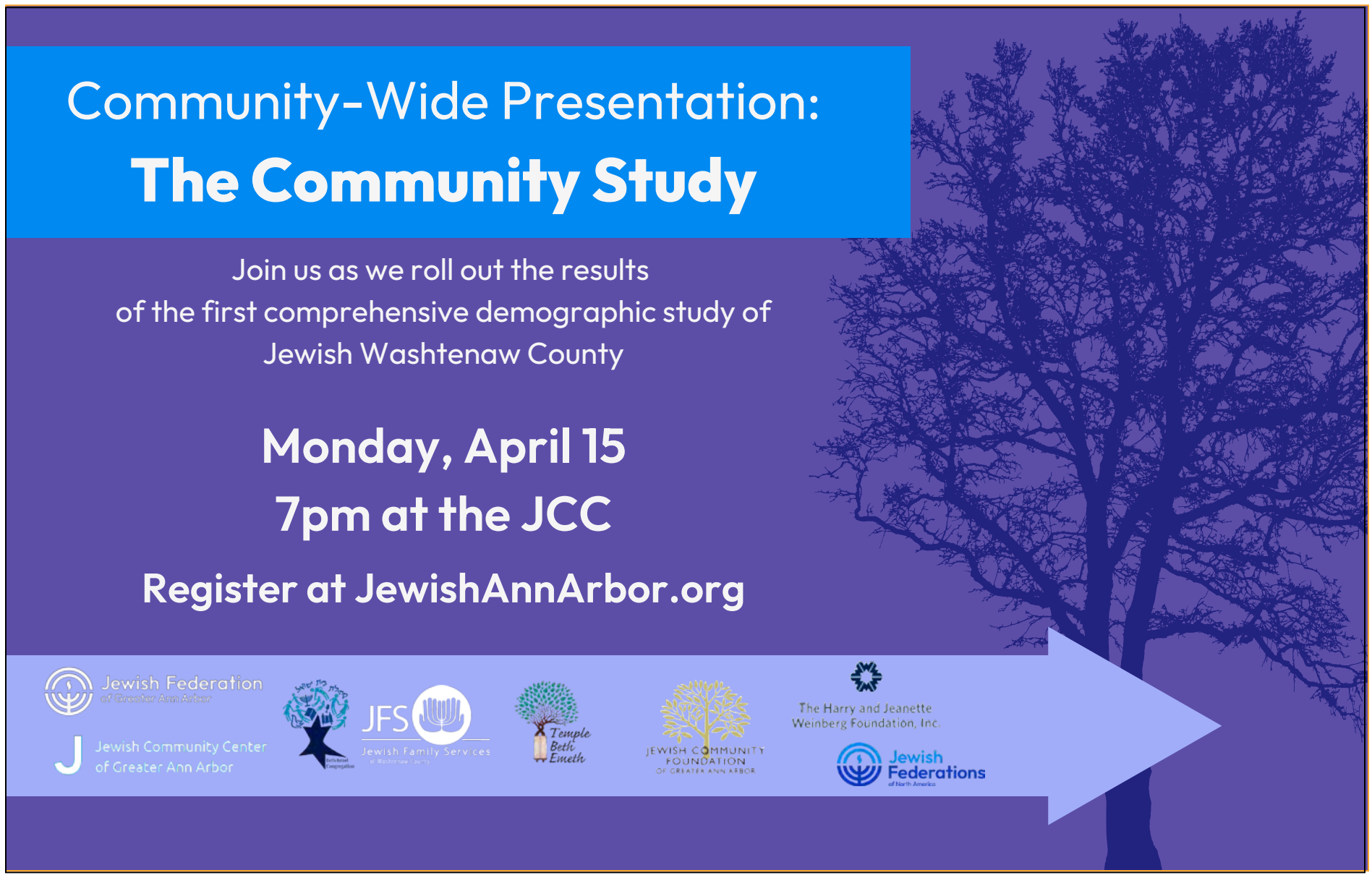
Community-Wide Presentation:
The Community Study
Join us as we roll out the results
of the first comprehensive demographic study of
Jewish Washtenaw County
Monday, April 15
7pm at the JCC
Register at JewishAnnArbor.org
Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor
Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor
JFS
Jewish Family Services
Temple Beth Emeth
JEWISH COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER ANN ARBOR
The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc.
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SOLO ACTS:
A SOLO AGING SYMPOSIUM & THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE
FRIDAY, MAY 10, 2024
10 AM - 2 PM
ANN ARBOR DISTRICT LIBRARY (DOWNTOWN)
343 SOUTH FIFTH AVE., ANN ARBOR, MI 48104
A SYMPOSIUM IN THREE PARTS
PART 1: SHARING SOLO AGING STORIES FROM ANN ARBOR
PART 2: SOLO ACTS: A THEATRICAL COMPILATION PERFORMANCE & COMMUNITY TOWNHALL
PART 3: POST SHOW PROGRAMMING ON LIVING SOLO IN ANN ARBOR
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Solo acts symposium and performance

Limelight, a community theater consulting company, will present Solo Acts: A Solo Aging Symposium and Theatrical Performance on Friday,

May 10, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the downtown branch of the Ann Arbor District Library, 343 S Fifth Avenue. This event will be free.

Twelve million adults over the age of 65 live alone in the United States, the highest rate in the world according to the Pew Research Study 2021. The proliferation of loneliness combined with aging is what AARP notes as one of the most significant and pressing social issues in the U.S.

This one-day event will bring together solo agers, policy makers, healthy aging advocates, and artists at a community convening on aging alone in Ann Arbor and beyond.

There are three parts to the convening.
Part I: Solo Aging Stories from Ann Arbor.

Part II: Solo Acts: A Theatrical Compilation on Solo Aging based on conversations with hundreds of solo agers followed by a community town hall.

Part III: Breakout sessions on living solo in Ann Arbor from healthcare, to transportation, to housing, to recreation and relationships.

Solo Acts' theory of change is to challenge (preconceived notions around aging alone), illuminate (make visible the experiences of aging alone), affirm (a solo ager's experience, both strengths and gaps) and advocate (identify ways one can advocate personally or professionally for those aging alone).

The May 10 symposium and performance will be preceded by workshops in April. The pre-symposium workshops have been requested by older adults at prior events and are intended to expand the Solo Acts project by providing solo agers an opportunity to express their own solo aging experience in a safe, inclusive, and creative space.

The pre-symposium workshops will take place in three locations.
Ann Arbor Senior Center (320 Baldwin Avenue) on April 5, 12, and 19, 1–2:30 p.m.

Cranbrook Senior Tower (2901 Northbrook Place) on April 1, 8, and 15

Ann Arbor Jewish Community Center (2925 Birch Hollow) on April 2, 9, and 25

Solo Acts: A Solo Aging Symposium and Theatrical Performance partners include: Congresswoman Debbie Dingell's Office, AADL, Limelight, Housing Bureau for Seniors, Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, CHRT, Commission on Aging, Jewish Family Services, and The Ann Arbor Senior Center.

RSVPs encouraged and walk-ins welcome. Free. RSVP on limelightlive.org or at http://tinyurl.com/4686z72x or call: (313) 489-0189

Discounted parking available.

Questions? decky@limelightlive.org ■

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2 Do you support these organizations on an annual basis?

3 Do you want them to exist for future generations?

4 How will you assure Jewish tomorrows?

Find out more about Life & Legacy® by contacting Osnat Gafni-Pappas at osnat@jewishannarbor.org

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ANN ARBOR ORTHODOX MINYAN
JCS
Temple Beth Emeth
Chabad House
CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor
HEBREW DAY SCHOOL OF ANN ARBOR
Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

LSA JEAN & SAMUEL FRANKEL CENTER FOR JUDAIC STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Frankel Center Events

Visit **lsa.umich.edu/judaic** for more information.

Christian Questions, Jewish Answers: George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*

Ilana Blumberg (Bar Ilan University)
Thursday, April 11 | 1:00 - 2:30 pm
2022 South Thayer Building
Zoom RSVP: https://myumi.ch/5yW53

2024 Frankel Center Book Party

The Jean & Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies
Tuesday, April 16 | 4:30 - 6:30 pm
2022 South Thayer Building
RSVP: https://myumi.ch/5yW53

Franz Kafka's Trial and the Antisemitic Trials of His Time

Michael Löwy, *Scott Spector*
Thursday, April 25 | 4:00 - 5:30 pm
2435 North Quadrangle Academic Complex

The University of Michigan College of Literature, Science and the Arts greatly values inclusion and access for all. We are pleased to provide reasonable accommodations to enable your full participation in this event. Please contact js-event-coord@umich.edu if you would like to request disability accommodations or have any questions or concerns. We ask that you provide advance notice to ensure sufficient time to meet requested accommodations.

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The Joys of KLEZMER!

2nd Annual JCOR Benefit Concert

Featuring:
Schmaltz • Neil Alexander and the Klezmer Fusion Band • Klezmer R&D

Catch the tunes, Clap your hands, Tap your toes, & Dance!

Sunday, April 7, 4-6pm
Followed by Light Refreshments
Under the kosher supervision of Rabbi Will Keller

Jewish Community Center
2935 Birch Hollow Dr.

Tickets online or at the door:

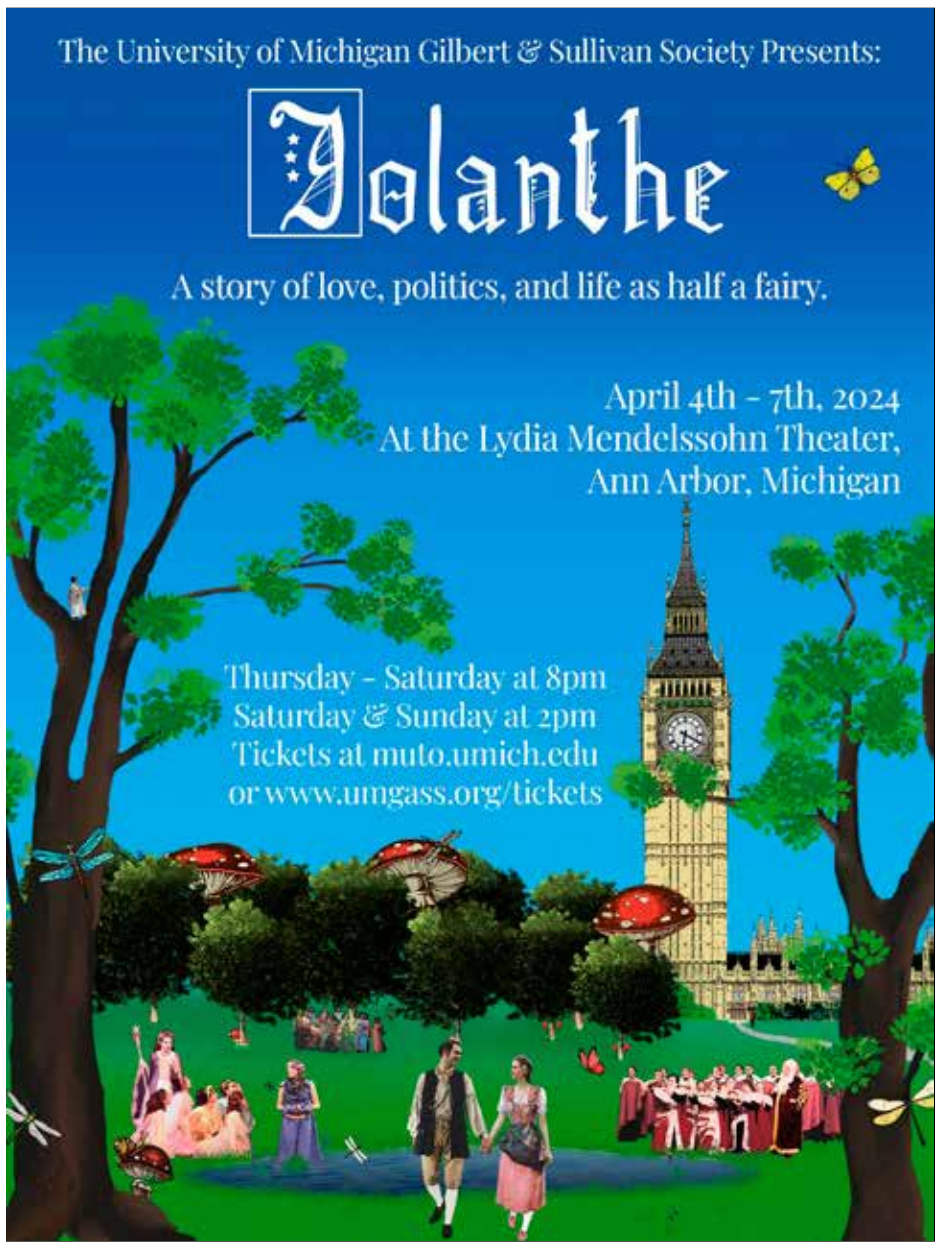
https://bit.ly/49ABGfb

Admission offered at these levels of giving:

Afikomen $108
Charoset $72
Matzoh balls $36
Students $18
12 and under Free

*All funds benefit JCOR, a collaboration of six Ann Arbor Jewish congregations organized in partnership with JFS to help newly arrived refugees start their lives in Ann Arbor.

2024



You and your family are invited to

The Jewish Cultural Society's Community 2nd Seder

Tuesday, April 23, 2024
6:00 pm
at the JCC

Registration is required:
www.jewishculturalsociety.org

Donations are appreciated, but not required.

The Jewish Cultural Society is the Ann Arbor area's secular humanistic Jewish community.

April events at Beth Israel

Everyone is welcome to join Beth Israel for services, classes, and events. Services are being held in person and virtually, unless otherwise noted on the calendar. Below is a list of the links to participate virtually in services at Beth Israel. Beth Israel is now live streaming services on the Beth Israel YouTube channel (Beth Israel Congregation AA MI). All links are also available on the Beth Israel homepage (www.bethisrael-aa.org). Please note that passwords are used. Contact the office to get the passwords at office@bethisrael-aa.org.

Rosenberg Scholar-in-Residence: Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson

Friday, April 5–Sunday, April 7

Beth Israel Congregation is proud to welcome Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson as this year's Rosenberg Scholar-in-Residence. Rabbi Artson holds the Abner and Roslyn Goldstine Dean's Chair of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies and is Vice President of American Jewish University. He has been a passionate advocate for social justice, human dignity, and diversity and inclusion. He wrote a book on Jewish teachings on war, peace, and nuclear annihilation in the late 80s, became a leading voice advocating for LGBTQ+ marriage and ordination in the 90s, and has published and spoken widely on environmental ethics, special needs inclusion, racial and economic justice, cultural and religious dialogue and cooperation, and working for a just and secure peace for Israel and the Middle East.

The Rosenberg Lecture Series is endowed through a generous contribution by Vic (z"l) & Val Rosenberg in memory of Cantor Alfred & Alice Rosenberg. We are grateful for the Rosenberg family's commitment to Beth Israel and to Jewish education.

Friday, April 5

Kabbalat Shabbat Services, 6 p.m.

Shabbat Dinner, 6:45 p.m.

Rabbi Artson Speaks: "Almighty? A New Way to Embrace God," 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 6

Rabbi Artson Gives the D'var Torah at services, 9:30 a.m.

Lunch Study Session: "Science and Religion: Enemies or Allies," 12:45 p.m.

Minchah, 6:30 p.m.

Reception, 7 p.m.

Rabbi Artson Speaks: "Israel Behind the Headlines," 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 7

Sunday Morning Talk: "Why Be Jewish" (with parent discussion), 10:30 a.m.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin

Monday, April 1 and 15, 4 p.m.

Led by Rabbi Robert Dobrusin, this class meets on Zoom on Monday afternoons from 4–5:15. We read the text in Hebrew or Aramaic with an accompanying English translation and all discussions will be in English so no familiarity with Hebrew is required. This winter we will be studying from the second chapter of the tractate Berachot which deals with the laws and traditions relating to the saying of the Shema.

Tot Shabbat

Saturday, April 6 and 20, 10:30 a.m.

Join us for a playful morning of Jewish songs, games, and stories. Challah and grape juice kiddush included. For kids age one through first grade and their parents, but all are welcome to join.

Babysitting at Beth Israel

Saturday, April 6 and 20, 9:30 a.m.

Babysitting is now available on the same days as Tot Shabbat and B'nei Mitzvot. Babysitting is no longer available on other Saturdays. If you are interested in registering for babysitting, please email Barbm@bethisrael-aa.org.

Camp-Style Shabbat

Saturday, April 12, 6 p.m.

Join us for a family-friendly dinner for all. Come enjoy a pasta bar dinner at 5:45 p.m. followed by the Friday evening service at 6:15 p.m. featuring Rav Nadav on the bimah and Rachel Lawrence-Lupton on guitar. Cap the night off with dessert after services. All are welcome to this free event. Please register on the Beth Israel website (bethisrael-aa.org).

Home Shabbat: From the Rabbi's Table to Yours (Online Only)

Friday, April 19, 6 p.m.

Join Rav Nadav and family for Kabbalat Shabbat service over Zoom. Please note that there will be no in-person services on this evening.

Tips for a Successful Seder with Rav Nadav

Saturday, April 20, 12 p.m.

Join us after services to learn Rav Nadav's tips for having a successful seder. Do you have a great tip? come and share it with the group.

The Passover Seder Kids' Experience at BIRS

Sunday, April 21, 10 a.m.

Bring the whole family! The entire community is invited to celebrate with BIRS families. Kids and adults will build cities for Pharaoh, demand our freedom, experience the plagues, shelter in tents (with glow sticks), pack for the first seder, and cross the Red Sea (of streamers).

Siyyum Ta'anit Bechorot

Monday, April 22, 7:30 a.m.

Join us in the sanctuary for Shaharit. Afterwards we will study a siyyum and break the fast of the firstborn in the upper level of the G & S 2010 Building.

Passover Morning Services (In-Person and Online)

Tuesday, April 23, 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, April 24, 9:30 a.m.

Monday, April 29, 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, April 30, 9:30 a.m. (includes Yizkor)

Aura of Kabbalat Shabbat

Friday, April 26, 6:00 p.m.

A Jewish Renewal-inspired singing service led by Rabbi Aura Ahuvia. The choir, dubbed the "Holy Levites," will be holding a rehearsal at 5:30 p.m. leading right up to and seamlessly into services. All are welcome to attend.

Theology Book Club — Online

Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.

Beth Israel Congregation's Theology Book Club welcomes you to join them to read together and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. The books are in English. Contact Paul Shifrin at (248) 514-7276 for more information.

In Person and Online Services

Evening Minyan

Sundays at 7 p.m. (in-person in M&M Chapel and virtual)

Mondays — Thursdays at 7 p.m.

Friday Evening Services — in person and virtual

Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6 p.m.

Shabbat Morning Services — in person and virtual

Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. ■

Beth Israel brings Rabbi Brad Artson

By Rav Nadav Caine, Beth Israel Congregation

I couldn't be more excited about Beth Israel's Rosenberg Scholar in Residence Weekend this coming April 3–5. Our scholar is my mentor, Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, and promises to be a weekend of learning and stimulating discussion.

Rabbi Dr. Artson holds the Abner and Roslyn Goldstine Dean's Chair of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies and is Vice President of American Jewish University in Los Angeles. He is a prominent figure in the world of Jewish thought, spiritual leadership, ethics and morality, special needs inclusion, LGBTQ ordination and marriage, environmental ethics, and peace with justice for Israel and the Middle East.

I first encountered Rabbi Artson when I was in my 20s and I flew to Camp Ramah in Ojai, California, for a convention of COEJL, the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life. Though the speakers were fine, the entire group came to full attention when Rabbi Artson began to speak. Everything he said combined his lived, personal experience with the urgency of the present moment and the depths of Jewish tradition. From that moment on, I had a model of what the litmus test of any rabbinic presentation should be: those three combined. To this day, I try to make sure every one of my sermons on some level applies Torah to the issues of the present moment, and my goal is that if anyone that day has wandered into a synagogue for the first time in years, they would feel they experienced something compelling.

Over a decade later, I chose the Ziegler Rabbinical School because there was no question that I wanted to learn how to be a rabbi from Rabbi Artson. The care, respect, and personal example he continually showed me during those years are debts I can never fully repay.

Rabbi Artson's Torah extends through many dimensions of our lives. The experiences of his autistic son, Jacob, and his own as his father, figure prominently in his teachings and in the urgency of inclusion in our institutions. Like me, his years of studying theology led him to the conclusion that Process Theology stands heads above any alternative, with its compelling vision of science and religion as fully integrated, and equally urgent in our personal lives as in our ecological lives.

In its essence, the vision of our way of seeing God is much more akin to the way people talk about "their relationship with the Universe." The way the Universe has invited life, cultivated symbiotic ("covenantal") connections, and provided humans a way of orienting within time, history, and moments of true creation, redemption, and revelation, is a game changer for those who tend to think science confirms a simple-minded Darwinian orientation. His book God of *Becoming and Relationship: The Dynamic Nature of Process Theology* is a succinct and eloquent primer. His book *Gift of Soul, Gift of Wisdom* is my foundation when teaching Madrichim. I don't think I've met a Jewish educator who doesn't have copies of his *Bedside Torah* and his *Everyday Torah* by their desk or bedside; and his contributions to *I Have Some Questions About God* serve as profound voices in this book to help children and parents form their own reflections and conversations about God. It is a book that is used year after year at Hebrew Day School. I'm excited to have Rabbi Artson lead a discussion for parents during Beth Israel Religious School on the Sunday morning of his visit, to which all are invited.

More recently, his teachings have focused on his experiences fighting cancer, and on the events following October 7.

So please, mark your calendars to attend Rabbi Artson's presentations during the weekend of April 3 through 5 at Beth Israel as our guest in the honored role of Rosenberg Scholar. The individual sessions are listed on our website at bethisrael-aa.org. ■

Lessons learned from my cancer

By Rabbi Dr. Bradley Shavit Artson. A version of this essay was originally published in the Jewish Journal, Los Angeles, Sept 6, 2023.

Now that I'm 63 I have noticed a change in my world, for the worse. I'm not talking about climate change or even politics; that's been awful for a long time already. The change I'm now noticing is that my doctor used to be a fount of optimism and good news, and isn't reliable in that department any longer. I don't know what may or may not be going on, but for the last couple years his prognoses have become downright depressing, a nattering nabob of negativism. A few years ago, he told me I had an odd growth on my back. That odd thing turned out to be melanoma. If I had been born 50 years earlier, that cancer would have killed me, but it hasn't.

A year ago, I went in for my annual physical and I have memorized his usual scripted response, which we've practiced for 30 years. He was supposed to announce, "your results are normal. See you next year." That's what he has always told me. But he didn't say that this time. Instead, this time he responded, "you know, the numbers look funny. You should get that checked out."

So checking into it is what I did with last year's summer vacation.

The Mishnah teaches, "Against your will you were formed; against your will you are born; against your will you live, and against your will, you will die." That's the essence of what it means to be a creature, to be alive. We are all of us living that inexorable reality in various stages at various moments. It is the inescapable reality of all perishing things, of every creature.

One of the traits I love about our ancient rabbis of blessed memory is that they were, above all, realists. A few decades ago, when I was in rabbinical school, I had the pleasure and privilege of volunteering as a summer chaplain at Sloan-Kettering, one of the premier cancer hospitals in the world. The senior chaplain at the time was Rabbi Pesach Krauss, a deeply spiritual and wonderful stoic of a rabbi, who embodied that same practical wisdom. On my first day as a chaplaincy intern, he allowed me to accompany him by the bedside of a patient. He approached the patient and asked something I didn't think you were allowed to say.

Rabbi Kraus asked, "What has your cancer taught you?"

Despite my surprise at the question, the amazing reality was that the patient had an answer. Right there, unrehearsed, in the hospital in the bed, there was an emerging clarity about the wisdom one can extract even from a terrifying and painful experience. Not just this patient, I discovered, but almost every patient that summer: They all could derive insight, ways to change their lives, ways to affirm, reclaim, or strengthen relationships. Learning to focus on the moment, to live with fear or uncertainty.

Some of them were even eager to talk about what they were learning from their cancer.

I learned that there are two kinds of lessons in the world. There are the lessons where you've never thought about it before, a completely new insight. We can receive those lessons all the time; we can learn once and then we're done.

And then there are the really deep lessons, the transformative lessons about love, struggle, meaning, compassion, and being present. Those lessons we learn again and again and again, throughout our lives. The lessons one can learn from cancer, if receptive, are of this second variety: transformative, evocative, and sometimes ephemeral.

To return to our primary storyline, my recent cancer: I had my annual PSA test, and the numbers came back funny. I went for an MRI, which came back with some shadows on it (that's bad, for those keeping score). That result forced me to have a biopsy, which indicated that I had two growths on my prostate, and that they were aggressive, which is a word you don't want to hear in the context of cancer. That result meant that my only option was surgery.

I am one of the lucky ones: great surgeon, superb medical care, and very good results. The margins were clear. And so there's no further therapy needed at the moment, my doctors will continue to monitor my results, and they'll take regular blood tests to check my PSA levels (so far, so good).

In the process of prepping me for the prostate surgery, the doctors ordered a complete body scan, which revealed a second cancer, unrelated to the first, in my thyroid. So after I had some time to recover from the surgery last fall, in the spring, I went through another round of surgery to remove my thyroid. That surgery preceded a treatment with a pill of radioactive iodine and a week of complete isolation to remove any remaining traces of the thyroid cancer. And thus far, my blood tests have come back clear. I have a cool scar on my neck, and take a daily pill to compensate for not having a thyroid. But other than that, it appears to be clear sailing ahead.

I'm one of the lucky ones. I know that. I know that for a lot of people that awful moment at the doctor's where they receive the news that there's something irregular in their test results is the beginning of a process much more dire. I know that. And I know that there are people reading this article, and people out in the world, who are struggling with much more challenging realities. I'm one of the lucky ones. But my cancer was also real: terrifying, threatening, and carrying with it the possibility of deep life transformation. I want to focus on a few of the lessons I have harvested this time around, because those are exactly the lessons of this penitential season, and indeed, of being alive.

There's a wonderful Talmudic story, in Massechet Sanhedrin, that asks the question, "Why were Adam and Eve created on the eve of Shabbat?" God had a whole week, but only produced people at the very end of that unprecedented week, not at the very start. If humanity is such a significant and complex creation, why not highlight us by advancing us to the top of the list, first among created things?

The answer that I most love is that humanity was created last, after everything else had already been completed, so that the feast would be ready for them. Everything had already been prepared. There was bounty in the garden, there was a table set. The world was ready to welcome and to celebrate them.

And so it is for us, my friends. The world is already prepped for us — long before I thought I would need it. A whole lot of people created a world-class medical center at UCLA. Everybody there is amazing. And the level of care I got could not be better anywhere in the world. A whole lot of people put in the thought, planning, resources, and energy long before I ever expected to develop prostate or thyroid cancer. Walking into that hospital lobby, one is greeted by a healing center full of other struggling patients, all of whom are beneficiaries of those who came before them. Generations of physicians, nurses, administrators, and philanthropists who anticipated their needs, so that at the moment we walk into the hospital lobby, it was as if someone said, "Oh, you're finally here. We're ready for you."

There is a wonderful Hasidic teaching that each person should carry a slip of paper on which is written the words, "for my sake, the world was created." I used to think of that as egotistical, but I now realize it is simple reality. The world really was created for each of us, which means that in addition to being grateful for those who prepared for my need in advance, this insight suggests that we, each of us, have the privilege of becoming support staff and advance team for everybody else, for those who will follow.

The second lesson is related to the first: Western people like to think of themselves as radically separate and autonomous: you and me against the world. That sense of independence is a delusion of bad metaphysics. There is no such thing as being that is not becoming, and there is no becoming that is not becoming in relationship to every other becoming. We are connected in a web of life and connection to each other and to all. In fact, we are no less than a manifestation of those others of which we are a part. Not only does it take a village metaphorically, but also all life actually constitutes a village. We are each of us participants in that living village, Earth, that we call home.

At no point in life were we separate from the world. When we were inside our mothers, we were absorbing voices and nutrients that linked us to thousands of other people. From the moment we were born, people were caring for us, cleaning us and attending to us: sometimes, well, sometimes less well. But at no point were we separate from all the other becomings that are permanently now part of you and me.

We are each of us a collectivity of everyone who has touched our lives, of all the people who have loved us, wounded us, cared for us, abandoned us, disappointed us, thrilled us, taught us we are the living integration of all of them. And our privilege is in turn to be that for the rest of the world, to be that for each other.

The third lesson: I am marinating in love. This insight doesn't make the cancer worth it, but I now perceive that love and care at a level of profundity I had never previously known. I had no idea so many people care. My family and Rabbis here and around the world and my own amazing IKAR community, the clergy, the staff, my fellow congregants, have been so present, so affirming, so caring in all of this that they take my breath away. We first joined IKAR almost 18 years ago. We've never questioned why we're here. Being a recipient of their graciousness, courage, and kindness has been extraordinary. "Olam Chesed Yebaneh," Psalm 89 says, "the world is built on love." I am, you are, we are all built on love. And together we fashion an extraordinary home for each other.

These are the lessons that I discovered while grappling with my cancers: We're born into a world that has already been prepared for us. We are part of a village across time and space, in our bodies, in our identity, our memories, our values, and we are bathed in love. All that bounty cascades in a fountain of timeless gratitude, and out of gratitude emerges our responsibility to shoulder our role as givers in turn. I am so grateful.

Just enunciating the acts of chesed, of lovingkindness, renews my gratitude. But here's what we do with gratitude. Hopefully, our gratitude manifests as quiet, resilient joy. It also manifests as a responsibility to make sure that this village is here for others too, to make sure that others can experience the sense that the world was prepped for them, to make sure that love abundant can lift us up and carry us forward. And finally, to build a world in which such grace is there, not only for the privileged few, but for all!

We have our work to do this season and through the years, but for now: To God, to creation, to us all, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. ■

JPOC Seder, cont from pg. 1

ethnic diversity of the contemporary Jewish community? What, to the African-American Jew, is Passover? How might "slavery" in Egypt vs. the Western Hemisphere impact the discussion? The prayers? What resources are available to address these questions?

Everyone who self-identifies as Jewish and as a Person of Color, along with family members, is encouraged to participate in The Seder at the JPOC Table: A Facilitated Discussion on Sunday, April 7, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m., at the AADL Pittsfield branch, 2359 Oak Valley Dr, Ann Arbor 48103; plentiful free

AA Tenants Union wins reforms

At an Ann Arbor City Council meeting, members of the Ann Arbor Tenants Union (AATU) spoke in favor of a proposed amendment to strengthen the Early Leasing Ordinance and Right to Renew Ordinance which was passed unanimously. AATU members also raised the alarm about local landlords charging enormous non-refundable fees to prospective tenants to join rental unit waitlists.

Carrie Rheingans, a Michigan State Representative and AATU member, spoke in favor of the amendment. "The stability we need as families is really important and the loopholes you are closing with your amendments are going to help families like mine." Rheingans continued, "Ensuring the rights of renters through Right to Renew and the Early Leasing ordinance and closing the loopholes is very important."

"This amendment will strengthen these important ordinances and should be passed," said Zackariah Farah, member of the AATU and Chair of the Ann Arbor Renters Commission. "However, there are other pressing rental problems that are not addressed in this amendment. In particular, bad landlords who have been charging prospective tenants waitlist deposits for occupied units."

Farah pointed to Campus Management Inc. (CMI), a prominent Ann Arbor landlord that owns 275 houses and apartments. According to documents obtained by the

ANN ARBOR TENANTS UNION

AATU, Campus Management charges tenants a $6,745 fee to join a waitlist for a two-bedroom apartment. The waitlist contract, termed an "options contract," is in effect an agreement to join a waitlist, and doesn't guarantee a lease to the prospective tenant. The owner of Campus Management, Chris Heaton, is the former president of the Washtenaw Area Apartment Association.

Tenants on these waitlists have no guarantee that they will receive a lease. The Ann Arbor Tenants Union (AATU) demands that landlords with paid waitlists roll back these harmful policies and return all fees to prospective tenants. The AATU also calls for a city and statewide ban on these exploitative waitlist junk fees and encourages tenants to file consumer complaints against any landlords charging them with the Michigan Attorney General.

"This amendment to the Right to Renew ordinance is a great victory for tenants," said Shreya Chowdhary, who is a U of M Grad Student and AATU member. "This change strengthens leasing protections for tenants and closes loopholes, but we still need to address the myriad other ways landlords exploit tenants in our city. For example, landlords shouldn't be able to charge tenants thousands of dollars in waitlist fees or other junk fees. We tenants deserve better and are glad that City Council agrees." You can read more about the Ann Arbor Tenants Union at AnnArborTenants.org. ■

Ann Arbor OKs new center to address "child care crisis"

By Ryan Stanton, first published by MLive

As executive director of Apple Playschools, Etta Heisler said she knows there's a "child care crisis" in Washtenaw County and she doesn't use those words lightly.

"Only 40% of families in our area have access to child care that meets their needs and child care costs here are the highest in the state," she told Ann Arbor planning commissioners Tuesday night, March 5, citing data indicating for every seven children under 5, there's only one licensed child care spot available.

"Families are paying more than $10,000 a year per child to have the care that they do have, even if it doesn't meet their needs," she said. "This lack of child care is keeping people out of work and impacting their earning capacity over time. At best, this is a seismic loss to our local economy."

Commissioners responded by voting unanimously to approve Heisler's request for a special-exception use permit to allow Apple Playschools to expand and operate another child care center at a new location, though they expressed some sympathy for a neighbor who spoke in opposition.

The nonprofit child care organization already operates three licensed early childhood centers in Ann Arbor, including one in a house at 511 Miller Ave. It is now approved to turn the New Hope Baptist Church house two doors down at 503 Miller Avenue — on the corner of Chapin Street — into another one.

Laurie Lounsbury, who lives between the two houses, expressed concerns she's going to be surrounded by loud children playing outside, saying it's already challenging living next to just the one child care center.

"I have nothing against children — I have two of my own and three grandchildren," she said. "But ... they already have 30 children on one side of me and I don't know how many teachers. This will put almost 100 people all the way around me. If you looked at the map they had, they're going to have the children playing behind my house."

Lounsbury told commissioners she's worried it will destroy the value of her property.

"I will be ruined, devastated," she said. "I will lose everything I have with this."

Commission Chair Wonwoo Lee said he heard Lounsbury's frustrations, but he and other commissioners agreed there were compelling arguments for the new center, including from an economic development perspective.

"It is not an exaggeration — it is an actually empirical fact that Washtenaw County is considered a child care desert," said Lisa Disch, City Council's representative on the commission.

"It's a great location, it's right by a public park and I strongly believe children have a right to exist in the city," Commissioner Sadira Clarke said.

Commissioner Daniel Adams said the legal standard for approval relates to the impact on the neighborhood.

"This is my neighborhood," he said, arguing the project is compatible with the neighborhood and will meet a dire need for neighborhood child care.

Planning officials pointed out it's already an active area with a marijuana dispensary, bakery, church, and market.

"I really feel like this use is very consistent with what's already present there," Adams said.

Frances Todoro-Hargreaves, impact investing manager for the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, spoke in favor of the proposal, noting the program she oversees has existed for about three years and it has three priorities: affordable housing, small business, and child care.

Todoro-Hargreaves said she has participated with Heisler in the Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition.

"We communicate and keep up to date with decisions in Lansing on how to handle this crisis," she said. "And we have been working with the team at Apple for the last four months on this project. The committee is supportive of this project."

Heisler said the new center will accommodate 47 children with 10 to 15 adult staff present daily, and it's intended for children 30 months and older.

Apple Playschools will operate it similar to how the city previously allowed the church's house to be used for an adult day care and health clinic, Heisler said.

"When we started exploring ways to better meet the dire need for child care in our community, the church leaders recommended we renovate the building and put it back to use for the community after sitting mostly unused for several years," she said.

There is ample parking in a parking lot to the south and in the church parking lot across the street, she said, also citing figures that about 20% of families and staff walk, bike, or ride the bus to get to the current location two doors down.

She also highlighted plans to install new fencing for an outdoor play area with new plantings as a visual and sound buffer between the play area and Lounsbury's property.

Heisler said in October when the child care center was first proposed there were hundreds of families on Apple Playschools' waitlists for child care in Ann Arbor. ■

Washtenaw County residents speak out on mental health and safety allocations

By Leslie McGraw

On March 6, a whopping 7 hour and 24-minute community discussion was held, primarily, on the subject of the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage, at the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners meeting. What was set up as a public policy debate and business-as-usual working session was derailed when members and stakeholders of the mental health community came out in droves to speak up for what many feel — considering what is at stake —is a rushed and confusing millage decision.

The mental health and public safety millage was originally voted into action on November 7, 2017, with first funds released in 2019. Prior to the election, residents were romanced for months of marketing of this millage, which claimed to heavily invest in Prevention, Crisis, Stabilization, and Diversion. The concepts were driven home, but the breakout of the funds — not so much. The millage allocates approximately $6–7 million annually in taxpayer funds with 38% to Community Mental Health, 38% to the Washtenaw Sheriff, and 24% to local municipalities with their own police departments.

Since 2019, the number of residents receiving support from Washtenaw County Community Mental Health has soared: 24/7 mental health and substance use support, 1,700 face-to-face crisis visits, and 645 uninsured patients are provided services each year (compared to less than 100 before the millage). Municipalities have used their portion primarily as a gap funding measure. For instance, the city of Ann Arbor will break ground this month on a new affordable housing unit that is partially funded with money from the millage. The county's sheriff's office piloted its LEADD (the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion and Deflection) team in 2021 with eight deputies and three sergeants trained.

Despite the improvements, there is still a huge mental health and homelessness crisis in Washtenaw County. This is what drew many to last month's BOC meeting. The deadline to have all millage ballot language to the clerk for the August election is May 14 and for the November ballot it is August 13. Some of the boots-on-the-ground groups present were Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice, Care-Based Safety, Shelter Now, Ypsi Peace House, Circling Back Peer Support Network, WeROC, Huron Valley Area Labor Federation (AFL-CIO), Washtenaw General Defense Committee, and Survivors Speak.

One of the main issues presented by activists and advocates was around allocation of funds. Community Mental Health has not found a way to support the whole person, with many clients lacking consistent access to therapists, food, shelter, medical care, and case management. Municipalities, in some cases, have used the money for good works or returned it — but the funds are still not being used the way the millage was intended or described to voters. The sheriff's office portion of the millage was called into question for lack of transparency and accountability in spending.

"There has been no expenditure on first responder mental health as some anticipated, and infrastructure upgrades are not aligned with voter expectations," says Alyshia Dyer, local activist, social worker, and candidate for Sheriff.

With no current stipulations on use of funds, a significant amount goes towards miscellaneous projects like infrastructure, rifles, and jail revamping. Moreover, as of December 2022, the Washtenaw County sheriff's office had a surplus of over $6 million. Commissioner Yousef Rabhi suggested the county move towards a grant-based approval system so that money would be moved, and approved, in smaller chunks. "I want to make sure that 25% of the money is not going to be spent as a blank check that we give to the cities and townships."

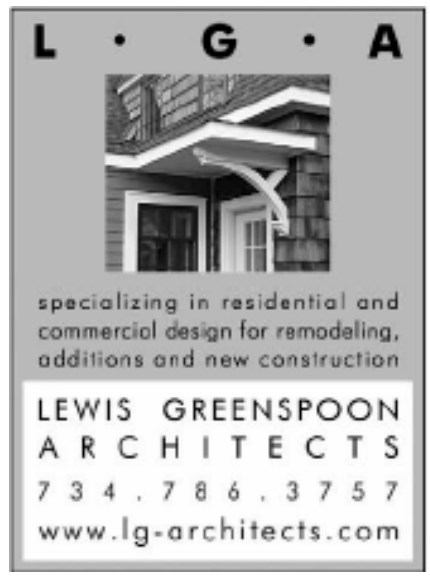
Sheriff Jerry Clayton spoke at the meeting about the importance of having policing with appropriate infrastructure to work together with the community. "It was a public safety mental health millage and the public safety part of the millage was to directly support Public Safety from a contract policing standpoint and then hit a nexus between Public Safety and mental health; we've done that."

Regardless of feelings about policing, the discussion on the millage and the usage of funds is still on the table. Many public commenters expressed feelings of disappointment in the fund allocation breakdowns that they did not understand when originally voting for the millage, others pushed for a "slow-down" period where residents could be educated on the millage and possibly influence the language prior to the August 13 deadline. According to the Board of Commissioners, the primary issue with changing the language of the millage, and its allocations, is the Headlee Amendment which prohibits the core language and allocation to be changed unless we were to rewrite and submit a new proposal.

In the meantime, there can be something done about educating Washtenaw County voters and transparency on how funds have been used in supporting its most vulnerable populations, which has not been done previously.

A comment by Ypsilanti Township resident, Danny Bell, sums up the frustration felt by many members of the mental health community. "Community Health … you think you guys would be there. But you guys actually … are not." ■

Graphic from 2017: Does this look like the money will be used for rifles?



Pesach Ba (Passover is Coming)

By Lonnie Sussman for the WJN

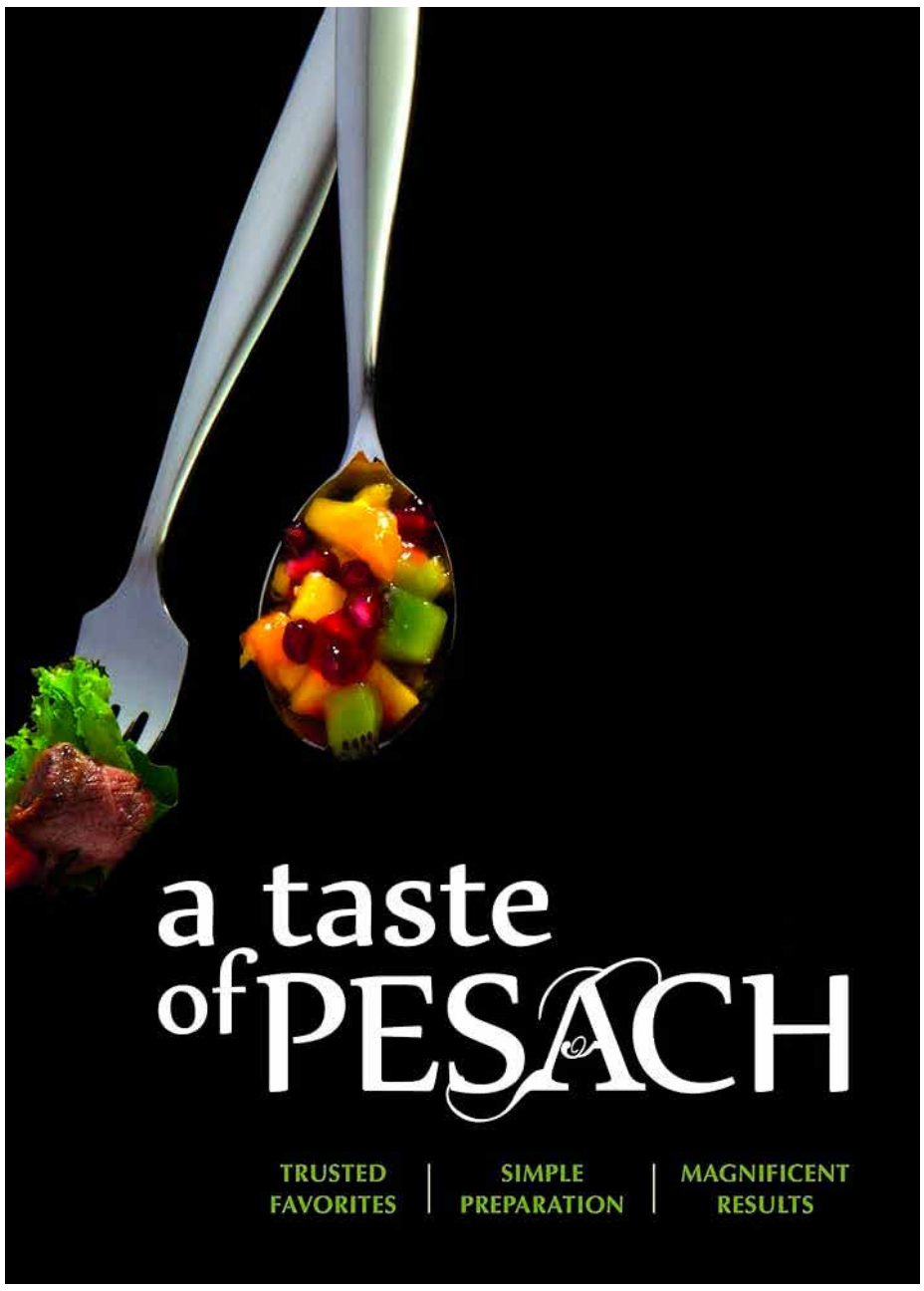
There is a lovely Hebrew song that I have been singing in my head as well as singing out loud, usually in the car, so I don't bother anyone else. I like to sing it in the voice of our daughter when she was 4 years old. We were living on a kibbutz in northern Israel and she and her friend walked along one of the paths singing at the top of their lungs, "Simcha Rabah, Simcha Rabah, Aviv Higiya, Pesach Ba". It means, "great joy, great joy, spring has arrived, Pesach is coming". This song has been an antidote to the sadness, anxiety, and darkness of the last few months.

Just as some days have been sunny and hopeful, some days have been very dark and depressing. I know I'm not the only one feeling seesaws of emotions.

Despite the gloom and doom of the news and situations in Israel and Gaza, as well as everywhere else, I tend to be an optimist and a mostly cheerful person, so the Jewish holidays hold great meaning and joy for me.

When Pesach comes in April and not in March, it is easier to sing "Spring is here." The geese started returning in February, the trees starting to bud later that month, by March the grass turned greener and here come the early flowers of April. Happy Spring, Happy Pesach, and my wishes for peace and joy in all our lives.

Pesach food can be highly controversial: whose mother's or grandmother's recipe for chicken soup, brisket, or chicken do you follow? I don't mess with traditions, so, no chicken or brisket recipes. Many of us have the same menu year after year but I like to try something new at every seder and throughout the week of Passover. This year it is going to be the long-cooked eggs that uses onion skins for flavor and color, called Hamim, from the Sephardi and Greek communities. I included this recipe in a column for last Pesach but didn't make it, so it's my challenge for this year. The other recipes found below use lots of onions so I should have plenty of onion skins on hand for making the eggs. We like to use eggs as a "nosh" for those who are "starving" along with raw vegetables to munch on before the main meal.



Uova Inhaminade, Long Cooked Eggs, Trieste Style

Cucina Ebreica, by Joyce Goldstein

Serves 8

These eggs were also made by the Greek Jews and called Haminados, which seems to come from the Sephardi community and the word "hamin" or oven. The Greek version adds one more step to include reheating the eggs on top of the stove with gently simmering water to which is added 1 tsp of turmeric or 2 pinches of saffron.

- 3 cups brown or red onion skins
- 8 eggs at room temperature
- 1 bay leaf
- 4 whole cloves
- 8 black peppercorns
- 1½ cups coffee grounds (optional)
- ¼ cup olive oil

Layer some of the onion skins on the bottom of a heavy pot and place the eggs on top of them. Add the bay leaf, cloves, and peppercorns and then the coffee grounds, if you are using them. Add cold water to cover the eggs and the olive oil on top of the water and cover the pot very tightly. Cook at a bare simmer, very low heat, for 6 hours, adding more water if needed to keep the eggs covered. When they are ready, plunge the eggs into cold water and then peel them.

Vegetable Stock

Moosewood Restaurant Cooks for a Crowd by The Moosewood Collective

Makes two gallons but needs a four- or five-gallon stockpot. I will cut this recipe in half, or maybe a quarter. Making soup for many depends on a good broth. If you use chicken broth you are probably all set. I want a vegetarian soup and usually use a vegan kosher broth, but it's not kosher for Pesach, so I will try this. Basically, chop up the vegetables, cover with water, bring to a boil, and then simmer for an hour. Strain out the veggies.

- 2 pounds potatoes. (No need to peel but wash well first)
- 2 pounds onions
- 2 pounds carrots
- 2 cups pears or apples, quartered and cored
- 8 bay leaves
- 2 tbs black peppercorns
- 2½ gallons of water

Caramelized Onion and Sweet Potato Soup

The New Passover Menu by Paula Shoyer

Serves 10

We love pureed soups and sometimes use squash or other root vegetables. You can swap out the sweet potato for zucchini and then add basil leaves and spinach at the end. The sweet potato soup is mildly spiced but you could add cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, honey, or any other spice you like.

- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 4 pounds onions, halved and cut into 1-inch thick, slices
- 4 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp white or black pepper
- 3 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-inch chunks
- 2 quarts vegetable or chicken broth

Use a large soup pot to heat the oil over high heat and sauté the onions, stirring occasionally. You want them well browned. Add the garlic, salt, and pepper and cook for a few more minutes. Then add the sweet potatoes and the broth, bring to a boil, and then lower to a simmer for about 40 minutes or until the potatoes are soft. Cool slightly and then puree the soup in a food processor or with an immersion blender.

Quinoa with Artichoke Hearts and Walnuts

Moosewood Restaurant Cooks for a Crowd by The Moosewood Collective

Serves 25

My friend, Diane, is a stalwart volunteer of the Beth Israel Social Action Team. Among the many projects she works on is the annual Volunteer Brunch. I want to thank her for coordinating this effort. The original recipe is made with couscous, but you can use quinoa instead as it is Passover-friendly. Halve the recipe for a smaller crowd and add your own choices of herbs, or additional vegetables or dried fruit.

- 2 pounds, 7 oz of quinoa and follow the directions on the box for salt and water
- 2 pounds, 8 oz whole artichoke hearts but quartered
- 2 cups scallions, minced
- 4 cloves garlic, pressed or chopped very finely
- 2 cups parsley, chopped
- ¼ cup each of chopped fresh dill, tarragon, or mint
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ½ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 cups walnuts toasted and chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Passover Root Vegetable Casserole

Alison Ladman for the Associated Press and published in the Detroit News, March 21, 2013

Serves 12

- 4 tbs olive oil, divided
- 2 red onions, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 pound carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces. You can use rainbow-colored carrots.
- 1 pound beets, peeled and cut into wedges
- 1 pound celeriac, peeled and cubed
- 1 cup unsweetened applesauce (or 2 apples, boiled and mashed)
- Zest of 1 lemon
- Zest of 1 orange
- 2 tbs fresh thyme
- 2 tbs chopped fresh savory (if you can find it)
- 1 tbs chopped fresh tarragon
- Salt and ground black pepper

½ tsp ground coriander
5 matzos, crushed

Heat the oven to 375 degrees. Coat a large casserole dish with cooking spray or oil. Use a large skillet over medium-high heat and add 1 tbs of the olive oil. Add the onions and garlic and sauté until they start to brown, about 10 minutes. Use a large bowl to combine the onions and garlic with the rest of the sweet potatoes, carrots, beets, celeriac, applesauce, lemon and orange zests, thyme, savory, and tarragon and then add the salt and pepper and toss the mixture. Spoon into the prepared casserole dish. In a small bowl, combine the crushed matzos with the remaining 3 tbs of olive oil and the coriander. Season with more salt and pepper. Sprinkle over the vegetable mixture. Bake for 1 hour or until the vegetables are tender when pierced with a fork.

Locally-sourced seder symbols, photo by Clare Kinberg

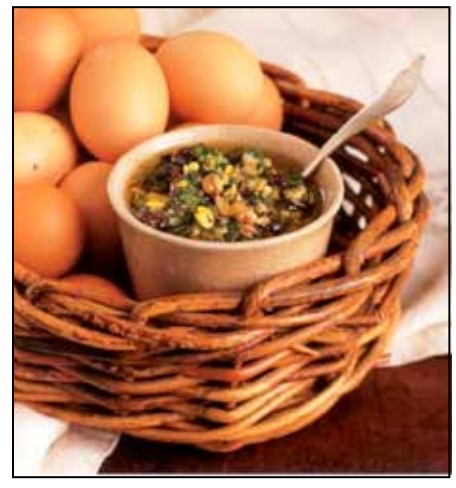
Snowballs

A Taste of Pesach, Project of Yeshiva Me'On Hatorah)

Makes 20 squares

¾ cup oil
6 eggs, separated
1½ cups sugar
½ cup ground almonds
2 tbs vanilla sugar
3 tsp instant coffee, dissolved in 1 tbs hot water
¾ cup potato starch

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat the egg whites with ¾ cup sugar until you get soft peaks. Beat the remaining ingredients with yolks in a second bowl. Fold the egg white mixture into the yolk mixture and pour into a 9x13-inch pan with parchment paper on the bottom. Bake for 1 hour and let cool. Then cut into squares.



Coconut Macaroons

The Passover Table by Susan Friedland but printed in a newspaper that was cut out and saved, maybe from The Ann Arbor News, I'm not sure Makes 40 macaroons

Vegetable oil for greasing parchment paper on 2 cookie sheets
3 egg whites
½ cup sugar
2 tsp lemon juice
1 tbs grated lemon peel
2 cups or 6-ounces grated unsweetened coconut

Beat the egg whites until foamy. Gradually add the sugar and beat until the eggs are stiff and shiny. Add the lemon juice and lemon peel. Fill a pastry bag fitted with a 7B or 8-star tip or use 2 teaspoons to form the cookies. Place them on the greased baking sheets. Bake in a preheated over at 275 degrees for 45–60 minutes, or until the macaroons are lightly colored. Halfway through the baking, switch the cookie sheets from top to bottom and front to back. Let them cool on a wire rack before storing them in an airtight container where they can keep for several days. They can also be frozen. ■

Be Grateful at the Grateful Crow"

By Candace Bulkley and Trina Fuller

Candace and Trina became friends in the Temple Beth Emeth adult b-mitzvah class that graduated in 2022. They will be honing their palates, visiting, and writing about a variety of independent, locally owned Washtenaw County restaurants, catering to a variety of dietary preferences.

You have to admit, it is odd to name a restaurant The Grateful Crow. What could it possibly mean, we wondered? And what's with the menu — they serve burgers and sushi? A bit of pre-visit research revealed the name was a mashup of the quintessential jam band the Grateful Dead and Southern rockers the Black Crowes, favorites of the owners, Suzei and Jason Povlich. Many of the menu items are named after their favorite tunes, too. This blast from the past now makes a bit more sense! Tucked into a shopping plaza with plenty of parking, just across the street from the Jiffy Mix Factory, this casual restaurant serves a varied crowd in an eclectic setting. On the night we visited, there was live roots music on a small stage behind the bar and the dining room was full. We were hesitant when seated near the stage, but it wasn't overly loud, and we were still able to enjoy our conversation.

The menu is as diverse as the two bands the restaurant was named after. Our tasters embraced it and tried the full scope of the menu, with the exception of the 4 entrees, which will have to wait for next time! After weighing our options from a well-rounded salad menu, we settled on the Hearty Farro Salad. Mixed greens, earthy roasted tomatoes, squash and shallots, toothsome farro, and slightly salty Sarvecchio cheese came tossed in an apple cider vinaigrette. The roasted squash missed the mark for lacking any caramelization and for being undercooked, but overall, this hearty salad was delicious. We appreciated the choice between half and full portions of most of the salads.

Next came the tempura vegetable appetizer. This was as good as any we have had at our favorite sushi restaurants. Beautifully presented, the light and crisp vegetable assortment disappeared quickly

after a dip into a slightly sweet tempura sauce and slightly spicy mayonnaise-based house sauce. That was the first hint that fried foods were standouts at the Grateful Crow. The panko chicken appetizer, also served with the house sauce, was truly some of the best chicken we have ever eaten. Rather than the chicken tenders that are ubiquitous bar food appetizers, this was a whole butterflied chicken breast, pounded thin, coated in crunchy panko bread crumbs, and fried to glorious perfection. With clean oil, pride in craft and product, ordinary ingredients like this chicken breast are transformed and become elevated.

On to the "rolls" section of the menu. With one fish-allergic diner, our choices were somewhat limited. We selected the shrimp tempura roll, which also contained avocado and cucumber. While it was tasty, the roll was short on shrimp, and any shrimp flavor was eclipsed by the avocado and cucumber. Next time we will save a few dollars and stick with the avocado and cucumber roll. We appreciated the real chopsticks, not the disposable kind, and that the soy sauce was served in the traditional pot to pour into individual bowls.

After seeing they were served with french fries, we felt we had to try a burger. We consider it obligatory to try them at any restaurant where they appear on the menu. After studying the selections, we went with the Althea, named after one of the shorter Grateful Dead songs. This beauty of a burger is topped with caramelized onions and sauteed shiitake mushrooms, alongside the usual lettuce, tomato, and red onion. The mushrooms were one of the best bites of the dinner. Sliced thin and sauteed to a golden hue, their earthy flavor was classically paired with caramelized onions. Every loose bit got picked up off the plate and savored. The burger itself was seasoned well and cooked perfectly, and the brioche bun held up well to the toppings. Alternative "burgers" were offered too; including open range bison, wagyu beef, vegan patty, or crispy parmesan chicken. The generous portion of thin cut french fries were served seasoned and piping hot — they won our seal of approval.

Despite the fact that we had already stretched our waistbands, we couldn't resist trying the Hawaiian bread pudding. Wondering what made it "Hawaiian" since we didn't find any pineapple inside, we asked our server who explained that it's made with Hawaiian sweet rolls, and then topped with chopped Macadamia nuts. It was a generous serving on its own and came topped with a big scoop of vanilla ice cream and Jack Daniels crème anglaise. One piece was more than enough for two people to share.

"Be Grateful" is the phrase on the back of the staff t-shirts at the Grateful Crow. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to head out there and try their delicious food. Service was friendly, laid back, and efficient without being intrusive. Vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free items are clearly indicated on the menu. Our stomachs were happy on our return trip down I-94 towards Ann Arbor. We dined well at the Grateful Crow and we will be back.

The Grateful Crow
420 N. Main St., Chelsea
https://www.thegratefulcrow.com/
734-562-2903 ■

April Calendar

Always check websites or call for updates before planning to attend anything listed here and for prayer services.

Monday 1

Tuesday 2
Make Your Own Succulent: JCC. Cost $25 1-2:30 p.m.

Wednesday 3
Yidish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. About 45 minutes each of conversation and reading. Free and open to all those interested in Yiddish language, literature, and culture, no matter what level of proficiency. For more information, to get the link, and to make certain that we are meeting on a specific day, please email Elliot H. Gertel at egertel@umich.edu at least one day before scheduled meeting day every Wednesday (except major Jewish holidays). 2 p.m.

The Vagina Monologues. JCC and Fed. Live performance. Cost $36. 7 p.m.

Thursday 4
Amster Gallery Exhibition with Esther Bar-Shai: JCC. 6 to 8 p.m.

Friday 5
Candle Lighting 7:48 p.m. Hachodesh
Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson Scholar in Residence: BIC. See schedule on page 20.

Saturday 6
Havdallah 8:50 p.m.

Sunday 7
Seder at the JPOC Table. See page 22. 11 a.m.
Joys of Klezmer fundraiser for JCOR. See page 18. 4 p.m.
Community Gathering Commemorating 6 months since October 7: Fed. At TBE See page15.

Monday 8
Passover Paint & Prep. NEXTGen A2. At the JCC. 6.30 p.m.

Tuesday 9 Rosh Hodesh Nissan
Rosh Chodesh Nisan Minyan on Zoom. AARC. See page 9. 9 a.m.

Wednesday 10
Yidish Tish: See above. 2 p.m.

Thursday 11
Christian Questions, Jewish Answers: George Eliot's Daniel Deronda, Ilana Blumberg (Bar Ilan University): Frankel Center. RSVP:https://myumi.ch/5yW53. 1 - 2:30 p.m. Zoom

Friday 12
Candle Lighting 7:56 p.m. Tazria
Passover Sale: WTBE. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturday 13
Havdallah 8:58 p.m.

Sunday 14
Passover Sale: WTBE. 3 p.m.

Monday 15
Community Study Public Presentation: Fed. At the JCC See page 16. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 16
Annual Frankel Center Book Party: RSVP: https://myumi.ch/5yW53. 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday 17
Yidish tish: See above. 2 p.m.

Thursday 18

Friday 19
Candle Lighting 8:04 p.m. Metzora (Shabbat HaGadol)
Passover Sale: WTBE. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
LGBTQ Shabbat Potluck: TBE. 6 p.m.

Saturday 20
Havdallah 9:07 p.m.

Sunday 21

Monday 22 Erev Pesach First Seder
Candlelight 8:07 p.m.
Chabad Community Seder: At the AA Senior Center. See page 4. 7:15 p.m.

Tuesday 23 Pesach Second Seder, tonight Omer count one
Community Second Seder: JCS. At the JCC. See page 19. 6 p.m.

Wednesday 24 Pesach

Thursday 25 Pesach
Franz Kafka's Trial and the Antisemitic Trials of His Time, Michael Löwy,Scott Spector: Frankel Center. 2435 North Quadrangle Academic Complex. 4 - 5:30 p.m.

Friday 26
Candle Lighting 8:11 p.m.

Saturday 27
Havdallah 9:16 p.m.

Sunday 28
The role of Israeli Arabs in medical fields: The Maimonides Seociety. Fed. On Zoom. 9 a.m.
Recovery Seder: TBE. See page 17. 4 to 8 p.m.

Monday 29

Tuesday 30

Phone numbers, websites, and addresses of organizations frequently listed in the calendar:

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM): 1429 Hill Street, 248-408-3269, annarborminyan.org

Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC): **2935 Birch Hollow Drive,** 734-445-1910, aarecon.org

Beth Israel Congregation (BIC): 2000 Washtenaw Ave, 734-665-9897, bethisrael-aa.org

Chabad House: 715 Hill Street, 734-995-3276, jewmich.com

Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies (EMU): www.emich.edu/jewish-studies/

Frankel Center: 202 S. Thayer St., lsa.umich.edu/judaic/

Jewish Community Center (JCC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 745-971-0990, jccannarbor.org

Jewish Cultural Society (JCS): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-975-9872, jewishculturalsociety.org

Jewish Family Services (JFS): 2245 South State Street, 734-769-0209, jfsannarbor.org

Jewish Federation: 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-677-0100, jewishannarbor.org

Pardes Hannah: 2010 Washtenaw Ave, 734-761-5324, pardeshannah.org

Temple Beth Emeth (TBE): 2309 Packard Road, 734-665-4744, templebethemeth.org

UM Hillel: 1429 Hill Street 734-769-0500, michiganhillel.org

Simchas and Sorrows

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends condolences to the families of:

Susan Farber, mother of Beth (Richard) Pearson, Jennifer (Martin) Wasserman, and Emily (Harsh) Nagaonkar, and grandmother of Maya Pearson, Leah Pearson, Micah Wasserman, and Noah Wasserman. February 14.

Lance Valt, brother-in-law of Ronnie Shapiro. February 15.

Nancy Carbone, mother of John (Debbie) Carbone, grandmother of Jacob and Ben. March 1.

Mark Feldman, brother of Arthur (Lori) Feldman and uncle of Julia and Dana. March 5.

Leah Axelrod, the mother of Brad Axelrod, February 15.
Helena Robinovitz, February 23.
Barbara George, the mother of Susan Funkenstein, February 28.
Marvin L. Starman, February 22.

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends mazel tovs to:

Ruth Petit on the birth of her grandchild, Reid Vignoe Petit, born to parents Aaron Petit and his wife, Alicia, and big sister Camden. Reid was born on February 29.
Mia Zoldan on her afternoon bat mitzvah, April 13.
Daryl Hafter on the birth of her great-granddaughter, Talia Ayelet Hafter, daughter of Mark Hafter and Piper Bold.

Chapter 9 cont from pg 8

in Chapter 8 does say they had license to do so.)

The Shalom Center's Chapter 9 Project isn't the only effort to place the violence of the Purim story in the context of the response to the October 7 attack on Israel. The Hadar Institute, an egalitarian Jewish educational institution, is offering an online class ahead of Purim on reading the megillah after October 7 that will explore the holiday not as a day of "drunken revenge fantasy" but as "a sobering story of confronting violence."

Not everyone is interested in dwelling on Chapter 9 and violence this year, especially as Purim also commands joy at a dark time. Many rabbis and Jewish institutions have focused their holiday planning on helping Jews figure out how to celebrate even amid searing grief and with more than 100 Israelis still held hostage in Gaza. Others see broader parallels between the Purim story and the present moment.

"The celebration will no doubt be muted this year," Halpern said. "The reality of Iran, today's kingdom of Persia, of ancient Shushan, having proxies wage a war against the Jewish people, is undoubtedly particularly resonant."

He added, "With all that, I think there is comfort to be found in the miracle of the eternal survival of the Jewish people." ■

Remembering who we are: A tale of three cousins

By Karla Goldman, Director of the Jewish Communal Leadership Program, U-Michigan School of Social Work

Over the last six months, my extended family lost three inspiring women — a powerful first-cousin triumvirate. In reflecting upon their lives, I have been struck by the ways in which they responded to the expectations of their era and, even more significantly, the ways in which they carved their own paths.

Judy Moore (1927–2023) and Ruth Fein (1927–2024) were both about four years older than my mother, Merle Goldman (1931–2023). They all came of age as young women in the restrictive 1950s. And, viewed through a certain lens, it might seem like their life courses ran much, and even eerily, the same. Born in the late 1920s and early 1930s, they were all raised by parents who arrived in the U.S. at a young age. They each were raised in an urban setting, with one other sibling — a brother. All of their parents owned (loosely connected) shops that sold fabric remnants — with a focus on reupholstery. This turned out to be a great Depression-era business.

They each married young. I believe my mother held out the longest, waiting a full two weeks after her college graduation to be wed. They each had four children — two boys and two girls each, and raised them (eventually, in Ruth's case) in the suburbs.

So, from a certain distance. you might assume that they all conformed to a simple and restrictive script — the one prescribed for women of their era, race, and class status. But in truth none of them did. In fact, what is so striking about these three cousins is how each, in her own way, defied the expectations of the era in which they came of age.

They came from and looked up to a strong immigrant generation of grandparents, parents, and aunts and uncles. They were blessed in particular with strong, often fierce, sometimes relentless, female role models. As Ruth shared in an oral history "all six of my aunts were about as strong-willed and about as powerful as you can get. And my mother was no shrinking violet either." These were women who grabbed onto America and its promise. They hoped, they knew, that their daughters, their nieces would seek meaning, purpose, and achievement that never would have been possible for them, or for Jews or women in the old world they had left behind.

Each of these three cousins transcended the feminine mystique which might have been their lot. The eldest, Judy Moore, passed away on the very doorstep of the new year in September. Brimming over as she was with insight, energy, and compassion, people were irresistibly drawn to Judy. One cousin aptly described her as "incandescent." Raised by an unconventional mother, she raised unconventional children and grandchildren, who roamed the world investigating new frontiers and communities, and she roamed with them and gloried in it.

When I saw her, already in her 90s, having moved back recently to California, following her already late-life adventure of building family and community in Israel, I remember her describing the beautiful spirit and culture of the senior home where she had moved. There were many losses that could have defined Judy's life, but I remember so clearly how she declared: "I am the luckiest person in the world."

My mother, the youngest of these three, as Ruth always rushed to remind her, died in November. As with her cousins, family was at her center. But family was only part of an ethos bred into by her parents, aunts, and uncles to invest herself fully in understanding the world around her. She ultimately brought her insight, energy, and curiosity to parsing a culture far different than her own — becoming the leading scholar of intellectual dissent in Communist China. Through her teaching, speaking, and writing, she was able to grant others access to understanding modern China in the context of the deep cultural foundation upon which it was built. While she of course looked at the ruling regime with a critical eye, she — characteristically as with so much else — looked toward the country's future with hope and optimism.

And in the last week of February, our family and leaders of the Boston Jewish community gathered to remember Ruth Fein. She would want us to remember her in concert with her two cousins — and her whole big family. At the end of a long oral history interview, her interlocutor asked if there were any other subjects she'd like to include. Ruth considered for a moment and then added "our family, our extended family." "Now this," she said, "is a big piece of being Jewish."

Ruth was one of the pioneers of women's public leadership in the Jewish community. She was the first woman to serve as board chair of any number of organizations, both Jewish and non-Jewish, local and national — including the American Jewish Historical Society and (in Boston:) Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP), the Jewish Community Relations Council, and the United Way. She was founding president of the New England Holocaust Memorial Committee and founding chair of the Jewish Coalition for Literacy. Not least, she was a founding and engaged board member of the Jewish Women's Archive.

How did all this come about? There is a tell in Ruth's oral history, about her time in college. She mentions being the founding President of the Baltimore Chapter of the Inter-Collegiate Zionist Federation of America and then about winning an election in the face of antisemites to become chair of Goucher College's Judicial Board: "there were opportunities," she observes, and "I was very involved."

Wherever she went Ruth "involved" herself. Whether in Chapel Hill, Washington, D.C., or Newton, Massachusetts, she was teaching, volunteering — and serving as president of Hadassah. In D.C., volunteering in the library of her children's school led to a role coordinating all the volunteer school librarians in the city. Becoming active in D.C. Citizens for Better Public Education led to being part of the group that founded the national effort "Reading is Fundamental."

What did being involved look like when she moved to Boston? At the end of her first year in town, Ruth read an article in the Jewish Advocate with the headline, "CJP Completes Its Most Successful Campaign." So she called CJP and informed them that the headline was not true; they hadn't completed their campaign. "What?" said the man on the phone. "Well, nobody called us," she told him.

It wasn't that her feelings were hurt. But here she was the daughter of a national leader of United Jewish Appeal. People in Washington had phoned ahead to let the Boston folks know that she and her husband were moving there. This was a failure at follow-through that the organization needed to address. From there, it really wasn't such a long journey to becoming the organization's first woman president. Wherever Ruth got involved, it was never a very long path to leadership.

As my mother always said, Ruth was a natural leader: people wanted to follow her. She was committed, she was effective. She was welcoming. She made a difference. There was a reason people, whether in boardrooms in Boston or on her porch at her summer home on Lake George, wanted to gather around her. I know I did.

There is an often-mentioned saying in our family that has come down to us from these cousins' grandfather, my great-grandfather. It was an instruction to his children to "remember who you are." Later generations have wondered if this was an invocation of snobbery or something else. My great-aunt Faith referred to it as a guide to right action in the face of difficult choices. She also shared that she and her siblings would often puzzle: "well, who are we?"

In the end, what I take from the repetition of this lesson is that the imperative to "remember who you are" can only be answered in the context of Aunt Faith's "who are we?" These women along with their cousins and aunts taught me and those in my generation that we need to understand ourselves within the larger stories and larger family of which we are a part.

Judy, Merle, and Ruth did this remarkable thing. In drawing upon the strength and faith of their immigrant grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles, they were able to focus on the bigger picture and, somehow, overlook the barriers and obstacles. Even through layers of loss — both Ruth and Judy suffered the loss of two of their children — and amid the failings and diminishments brought by aging, they maintained the kind of unflagging buoyancy, energy, and optimism that characterized them all their lives. They channeled the fierceness and passion of their immigrant forbears, and remained, each in their own way, loving, strong, intelligent, embracing, somehow and always well put together, and ineffably beautiful. May their memories always be a blessing, and may they always remind us not just of who we are, but of who we can be. ■

Cousins Merle Goldman, Ruth Fein, and Judy Moore at a family celebration, circa 2004

Charlie Biton, co-founder of Israeli Black Panthers and first Israeli to meet Arafat, dies at 76

Asaf Elia-Shalev, originally for the JTA

It was March 1971 and Charlie Biton and his friends had recently taken to calling themselves "the Black Panthers" in admiration for the revolutionary African-American group. The group, one of dozens of street gangs in Jerusalem at the time, was about to hold its first demonstration against the racism and poverty experienced by Mizrahi Jews in Israel.

To Golda Meir, Israel's American-raised — and Ashkenazi — prime minister, a Mizrahi rendition of the Black Panthers was intolerable. A few nights before the protest, she held an emergency meeting with the country's top police officials and authorized the arrest of Biton and 14 others to prevent them from demonstrating.

Her decision and the subsequent police raids were an unprecedented assault on the free speech of Israel's Jewish citizens. But the ensuing public outrage ensured the protest would happen anyway, and following a peaceful rally, the government released the detainees.

"Everywhere we go, every government office we enter, we are treated totally differently," a 23-year-old Biton told a reporter shortly afterward, comparing the treatment of Mizrahim to that of Black people in the United States. "It's why we decided to organize, so that other young people won't turn out like us — screwed, depraved, and bitter."

From those arrests, the Israeli Black Panther movement emerged and Biton, as its co-founder, was set on a course of activism and politics that would have seemed unlikely for someone with limited schooling and a criminal background.

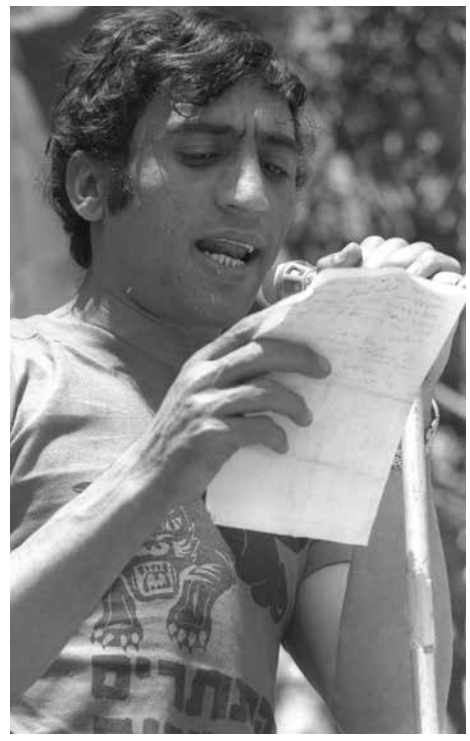
Biton died in late February at age 76, having ridden the success of his protest group to a 15-year career as a member of Israel's parliament, serving from 1977 to 1992 mostly alongside communists in the Hadash faction. Biton distinguished himself as a fighter for social change and an early voice for peace with the Palestinians. No cause of death was announced.

His fellow left-winger, the late Uri Avnery, took credit and is widely regarded as the first prominent Israeli to meet with Palestinian national leader Yasser Arafat. But Biton actually beat him to the feat by two years in 1980, a fact that Avnery himself established at the time in a newspaper column.

Born Shalom Biton in Casablanca, Morocco, in 1947, he was the eldest of six children. The family immigrated to Israel in 1949, far earlier than the vast majority of Moroccan Jewry. They claimed an abandoned Palestinian apartment in the Musrara neighborhood of Jerusalem as their home and were surrounded almost exclusively by other families from Morocco.

Crowded conditions in the ethnic ghetto were exacerbated by the immediate proximity to Israel's militarized border with Jordan. Barbed wire and ambient sniper fire marked Biton's childhood, a situation that kept Musrara isolated until 1967 when Israel conquered the West Bank and reunited Jerusalem.

Anger at the Israeli establishment seemed to run in the family. Biton's father, Eliyahu, wound up being labeled a "political provocateur" in memos written by undercover detectives, which surfaced decades later by researchers for the documentary The Ancestral Sin by David Deri. The memos outlined police surveillance operations targeting Israel's Moroccan Jewish community in 1959, after



the police shooting of a local resident in Haifa's Wadi Salib area triggered civil unrest.

Like many boys growing up in Musrara at the time, Biton was regularly arrested on charges such as petty theft and loitering. Police regularly beat children in detention, and Biton once recalled a beating he suffered at age nine. At 14, he was sentenced to a year in a juvenile facility.

The Six-Day War, in 1967, transformed the lives of Biton and his friends. The reunification of Jerusalem put Musrara at the geographic center of a newly exciting and optimistic city. With the fighting over, the spirit of rock 'n' roll and left-wing radicalism finally arrived in Israel, rushing in with the sudden torrent of foreign arrivals from the United States and Europe.

Under the influence of social workers and Israeli and American radical activists, Biton, Saadia Marciano, and others decided to organize, choosing America's militant Black Panthers as their model. The Musrara boys were savvy enough to recognize that using such a name would aggravate the establishment but couldn't have guessed just how alarmed the establishment would get. The Panthers became the topic of extensive news coverage and derogatory opinion pieces before they launched a single action. The attention, which culminated in their arrest, taught them a valuable lesson about the power of publicity.

For the next two years, the Panthers continued to shock and provoke. They held demonstrations, clashed with police in the streets, issued proclamations, published propaganda and otherwise captured the imagination of the nation.

Biton led Operation Milk, one of the most famous stunts carried out by the Panthers. Before dawn on March 14, 1972, Biton and a few others swept through the upscale neighborhood of Rehavia and stole bottles of fresh milk that had been delivered to the doorsteps of households with the means. They left notes behind. "We thank you for giving away your milk to hungry children, instead of to the dogs and cats in your homes," the notes read. "We hope this operation inspires you to contribute to the war on poverty."

A short while later, across town in Asbestonim, an impoverished neighborhood named after the asbestos sheets used to hastily erect the local dwellings, residents woke up to a pleasant surprise. On their doorsteps, they encountered what was an almost unheard-of luxury for them: freshly delivered milk. Another note was attached. "This is a reminder to all citizens and to the government, and especially to you, that we care," the note read.

The lesson Biton derived from his time with the Panthers in the early 1970s took him on a very different course from most Mizrahi Israelis, who after the next decade would embrace the political right.

Biton became disillusioned with the very notion of Zionism, a disenchantment that was solidified when in October 1971 he took a trip to Europe to meet Marxists and revolutionary groups. Biton was so enamored with global left-wing politics that he named his daughter Angela after the American revolutionary Angela Davis, a longtime critic of Israel.

In 1975, he went to Europe again, and this time, he and two fellow Panthers met with representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which was still regarded in Israel as a terrorist organization. A few months later, the Panthers held a national conference at which they voted to support the creation of a Palestinian state, a radical position for its time. In the language of the approved resolution, the Panthers declared that "a just peace is possible only on the basis of mutual recognition of Israel and the Palestinians, founded on the principle that this land is the common homeland of two peoples, each of which has the right to an independent country and sovereignty."

Having earned his left-wing bona fides, he joined the Israeli Communist Party in 1977 to form a new political faction called Hadash. They ran for election and secured enough seats to make Biton, the son of two janitorial workers, a member of parliament. He would serve until 1992.

Very few Mizrahim followed Biton to Hadash. Instead, many abandoned the Mapai party, which represented Labor Zionism and ruled Israel since its founding, and followed the charismatic leadership of Menachem Begin and the right-wing Likud party. The Mizrahi electorate, emboldened in part by the Panthers' attacks on the old order, brought Begin to power in 1977 and kept his party in control of the country almost continuously since.

As a lawmaker, Biton continued to press the Israeli establishment and fight for his causes. Within Biton's first two months as a parliamentarian, he exposed a system of cheating in university admissions and jolted education authorities who had ignored the widespread sale of examination materials. He also publicized a prison strike against poor conditions and mistreatment, which was being led from behind bars by incarcerated Panthers.

Later, he famously handcuffed himself to the speaker's podium in parliament in protest, which earned him a suspension. For another stunt, he delivered a speech on social issues with his back to other lawmakers "since talking to them is no better than talking to the wall."

After leaving office, Biton continued to be active in Israeli political life and served as a symbol of persistent Mizrahi claims against Israel's Ashkenazi-dominated ruling class. In 1998, after Ehud Barak, who was running as head of Israel Labor party, issued a formal apology for his party's role in mistreating Mizrahim in Israel's early years, Biton and fellow Panthers Reuven Abergel and Kochavi Shemesh wrote a letter to Likud's Benjamin Netanyahu, who was then serving his first term as prime minister.

"Even if we didn't mean to do so, we were one of the reasons that Likud found voters among the Mizrahim," the Panthers wrote. "Since the various leaders of the Likud have been known to enjoy Mizrahi votes and have not solved the problems of desperation and poverty in the poor neighborhoods and development towns, we call on you to follow in the footsteps of the head of the Labor party and ask for forgiveness from the second and third generation of Mizrahi immigrants."

No such apology has been issued by Netanyahu, now in his sixth term.

Over the decades, Biton drifted away from the radical left. After the failure of the Oslo Accords to achieve peace and the violence of the Second Intifada, he came to adopt the mainstream Israeli view that there is no Palestinian partner for peace.

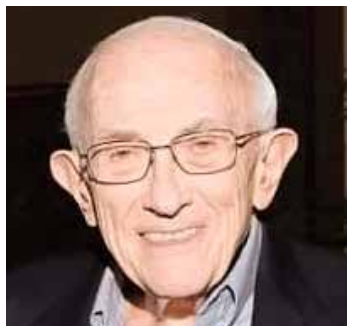
Politicians and commentators from across Israel's political map noted Biton's death and praised his legacy. Centrist Benny Gantz, a former minister of defense and Netanyahu critic now serving in Netanyahu's war cabinet, said Biton "didn't just pursue justice — he was justice."

Aryeh Deri, head of the Orthodox Sephardic party, said Biton "inspired everyone in his social struggles." Ayman Odeh, head of Hadash, said, "We will always remember his struggle to unite the disadvantaged in pursuit of peace, equality and social justice."

Biton is survived by a wife, children, and grandchildren. ■

Obituaries

The WJN prints obituaries, memories, and eulogies free of charge for family members of Washtenaw Jewish community members as a service to the community and to honor the lives of those who have passed away. When local congregations send condolence notices to the WJN, the editor searches for obituaries online. Also, community members are invited to send obituaries to the editor.



Marvin L. Starman, MD, 87, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, died on February 22, 2024. He is survived by his adoring family: wife, Lynne Starman; children, Lori (Doug) Weissman, Wendy (Larry) Papier, Jeff (Helen) Starman; and grandchildren, Alec (Sloane) Weissman, Sarah Starman, Jacob Starman, Carli Starman, Evan Papier, and Max Papier. He is also survived by his mother-in-law, Justine Wexner; sister, Sheila Sloan; brother-in-law, Richard (Beth) Wexner; nephews Dr. Andrew (Jill) Sloan, Matthew (Kelly) Sloan, Adam (Ashley) Wexner, niece Nicki (Lee) Eisenstein, and many other beloved family members and friends.

Dr. Starman had a distinguished career in the field of mental health for 60 years, serving as a psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, training analyst, and associate professor. He was an active member of the Michigan Psychoanalytic Institute, Society and Foundation for approximately 57 years, having served as a Training and Supervising Analyst, chair of the Institute's Faculty Selection Committee for 10 years, and as an advisor, supervisor, and instructor at the Institute. He also was an active Foundation Board member and fundraiser for many years. Dr. Starman began his professional journey as a Captain in the Medical Corps of the United States Army, serving as Chief of the Psychiatry Service at Madigan General Hospital. He received an army commendation medal for exemplary service in this capacity and was very proud to have served his country. Another highlight of his early career was his election and service as President of the Oakland County Medical Society. Throughout his career, Dr. Starman was recognized for having unyielding passion for his work and dedication to helping patients. His commitment to family and friends was equally noteworthy; Marv prioritized relationships, giving each loved one undivided attention, a shoulder to lean on, words of wisdom, and boundless compassion. He was also known for his sense of humor that lifted spirits and filled rooms with laughter.

In addition to passion for his profession, Marv loved University of Michigan and Detroit sports, food, the arts, theater, opera, travel, and most of all, spending time with family and friends. He was a special, caring man who left a mark on everyone he met, and will be dearly missed.

Contributions may be directed to the Michigan Psychoanalytic Foundation, 32841 Middlebelt Road #411, Farmington Hills, MI 48334, https://www.mpi-mps.org/get-involved/donate, Fisher House, 12300 Twinbrook Pkwy, Ste 410, Rockville, MD 20852, http://www.fisherhouse.org, or Jewish Federation of Detroit, 6735 Telegraph Road Suite 260, P.O. Box 2030, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303, https://jewishdetroit.org/send-a-tribute. Arrangements by The Ira Kaufman Chapel.

Mark Feldman, M.D., of Dallas, passed away on March 5, 2024, surrounded by his family. He will always be remembered as a loving and devoted father, grandfather, brother, uncle, doctor, and teacher to all that knew and loved him. He was born on April 14, 1947, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Jerome and Mildred Feldman, both of blessed memory.

Mark was a world-renowned leader in the field of internal medicine and gastroenterology, and aside from being an accomplished clinician and diagnostician, was always learning, reading, writing and above all else, teaching. For over 40 years, he took immense joy in nurturing and developing thousands of medical students and residents into the best internal medicine practitioners in the country.

An author of more than 175 peer-reviewed research articles and more than 50 book chapters on a range of medical topics, Mark was an editor of Gastrointestinal and Liver Disease, widely considered the world's preeminent work on digestive diseases. Over the years, Mark's medical research has appeared in science's leading medical journals with worldwide circulation.

He began his professional career as chief of gastroenterology at the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Dallas. He eventually was elevated to chief of medicine and spent 24 years providing care to our country's veterans. In 2001, he moved to the position of chief of internal medicine at Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas, where he remained until his retirement in 2021. He also served in various teaching roles in the Internal Medicine Department at UT-Southwestern School of Medicine.

In 2008, Mark was awarded Mastership in the American College of Physicians, one of the highest honors bestowed on physicians in the United States. Earlier in his career, he received the coveted Young Distinguished Scientist Award from the American Federation for Clinical Research and received the prestigious C.A. Ewald Prize, presented by the German Society for Digestive and Metabolic Disease.

He graduated from Temple University in 1968 with a degree in mathematics. He later graduated first in his class from Temple University School of Medicine, where he completed his medical residency. He completed a fellowship in gastroenterology at UT Southwestern in 1977.

His professional accomplishments equaled his personal. He was an avid golfer, having scored two holes-in-one in his career, a voracious reader, devoted family man, and doting grandfather for the last 20 years.

Mark is survived by his loving wife of 54 years, Barbara Feldman of Dallas; children, Daniel Feldman (Dallas), Elizabeth (Harris) Gubin (Dresher, Pennsylvania) and Dr. Matthew (Julie) Feldman (Dallas); grandchildren, Noah, Shayna, Jordan, Olivia, Daren, Hudson, Jacob, and Nathan; siblings, Carol (Jules z"l) Einhorn and Art (Lori) Feldman; father-in-law Joseph Freeman; and siblings-in-law Dr. Karen (Dr. Edward) Marcus.

After a private burial service, the family held a funeral service at Congregation Shearith Israel, Beck Sanctuary, on March 10. Memorial contributions may be made to your charity of choice or if you are so inclined, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (lls.org) or the Mark Feldman, M.D., Internal Medicine Fund (https://www.texashealth.org/Foundation/Ways-to-Give/Help-Fund-Education-of-Texas-Health-Dallas-Medical-Residents).

Leah Joy Axelrod, 94, passed away on February 15, 2024. Beloved wife and best friend of the late Leslie for 70 wonderful years; loving mother of David (Penny), Harry (Hollis), Garrick, Bradley (Robin), Nell, and the late Craig (Carolina Gonzalez); cherished "Gram" of Melanie, Robert, Peri (Scott) Babendir, and Ari; much loved "Gram Gram" of Eliana Babendir.

Leah had multiple careers and was always an active leader in the community. She was involved in religious organizations: B'nai Torah Sisterhood president, gift shop manager, choreographed temple productions, and a Life Member of Hadassah. Leah was Founder and past president of Highland Park Historical Society, member of Chicago Jewish Historical Society and past-president of Illinois State Historical Society. She taught creative dramatics to children with the Highland Park District, read books to children for story time at Highland Park Library, and conveyed her love of history to children by founding and running the Highland Park Junior Historical Society.

A proud business owner for more than 25 years, she owned and operated My Kind of Town Tours, her own tour company, educating people of all ages on the ethnic, religious, architectural, and food diversity existing in the Chicago and Milwaukee metropolitan areas. She will be dearly missed. Memorial donations in her honor made be made to the Illinois State Historical Society, www.historyillinois.org/SupportUs/MakeaDonation or the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, www.chicagojewishhistory.org/the-society/donate. A graveside service was held at Shalom Memorial Park. For the link to view the service, shiva information, and to leave condolences www.s 847) 255-3520.

Helena Robinovitz, 79, of Chelsea, and more recently of Glenview, Illinois, died peacefully and surrounded by loved ones on February 23, 2024. A lover of wildlife, nature, gardening, and animals, she had recently moved from her home in the countryside in Michigan to be near family. As was her typical fashion, she had made several new and dear friends almost instantly.

Helena was born in Riverside, California, but spent most of her childhood in the Detroit metro region. She is survived by her brother Joel (Anne) Hodgson and her dear cousins Polly and Mary Ann.

On February 6, 1976, she married her beloved husband, Stewart Henry Robinovitz, and he preceded her in death. Children Isaac (Annemarie) and Miriam (Victor) survive.

Helena was active in her many communities, and she had a gift of bringing people together. For several years she was an educator at the Waterloo Recreation Center and later contributed to talent development in Chelsea Public Schools. She was the director of religious school for several years in Temple Beth Israel of Jackson, and later was an active volunteer at the Back Door Food Pantry and Alpha House of Ann Arbor. She also volunteered with Jackson Audubon Society, Haehnle Sanctuary, and the Waterloo Farm Museum. She was a recent congregant of Makom Solel Lakeside of Highland Park, Illinois, and was previously a member at Temple Beth Emeth and Congregation Beth Israel, both of Ann Arbor.

Helena was a beloved friend to many. She was a devoted and loving wife and mother. Her light, strength, and enthusiasm for life will be treasured always.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, February 27, 2024. Helena was buried beside her husband, Stewart, in Arborcrest Memorial Park of Ann Arbor, Michigan, following the service. Rabbi Nadav Caine of Congregation Beth Israel officiated. Donations in her memory can be made to Alpha House, Back Door Food Pantry, Congregation Beth Israel of Ann Arbor, Chelsea Cancer Center, Unity Hospice, and Haehnle Sanctuary.

Barbara George (1941–2024). Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to Sylvia and George Laikin, Barbara George majored in history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, earned a M.S.W. from Simmons School of Social Work, and graduated with a J.D. from California Western School of Law. She lived in San Diego from 1974 to her passing.

Those details of her life, however, don't fully capture her dynamic energy, her sharp sense of humor, her passion for animals and especially her dogs, her deep empathy for others, her love of conversation, her strong political engagement, her thirst for new experiences, and her sense of adventure. In her late 40s she shifted from her focus as a stay-at-home mom to selling Cadillacs and Hyundais. In her 50s she went back to school, studying law with peers half her age, and became a family attorney. In her 70s she tried sky diving for the first time, repeatedly zip-lined, and traveled with her older grandchildren on international adventures to Paris, the Galapagos, and South Africa, Zambia, and Botswana. She had an incredibly active social life and lots of friends, and she actively volunteered throughout her life for schools, women's organizations, and more.

Barbara is survived by her long-term close friend, Robert Avila; her daughters, Susan Funkenstein (Paul) and Laura Lyke-Benavides (Garet); and her four grandchildren, Sally, Jacob, Cammie, and Ezra. She will be missed dearly. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations, in memory of Barbara George, to Planned Parenthood: www.plannedparenthood.org ■

New multi-sport program gets kids active

Kidokinetics, a unique youth athletic enrichment program, is all about getting kids active and having fun! Kidokinetics was founded in 1996 by a South African Jewish woman who has dedicated a lifetime to introducing the playful side of sports and physical education to kids aged 1–12. With schools reducing recess time, and screen time on the rise, Kidokinetics steps in to keep children moving. What sets this program apart is that every class, camp, or afterschool program is an exciting experience, fostering confidence in kids when it comes to trying sports, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

Jennifer Tankanow, a member of the Washtenaw County Jewish community, was convinced to buy the SE Michigan territories of the franchise when she witnessed the profound impact it had on today's youth. "I was amazed to learn that simple cross-body movement and focus on gross motor skills can enhance balance and coordination and improve children's focus and attention. Research suggests improving gross and fine motor skills can predict later language outcomes. I'm thrilled to make a positive difference in our community and get kids moving in a fun, engaging, and non-competitive way!"

Kidokinetics is truly mobile. They bring certified coaches, fantastic equipment, 20 sports, and endless fun and games to childcare centers, after-school programs, birthday parties, and events. They can also supplement PE classes in private and charter schools. The local franchise, which launched last September, has already established a presence with almost 25 programs and has impacted over 500 kids, including JCC early childhood students. Due to the excitement of the vast array of sports and positive feedback from the community, they will host nine weeks of half-day summer camps that include lacrosse, croquet, disc golf, volleyball, and many more.

The foundation of the program is to bring the F.U.N. factor. Every engagement supplies inclusive sports enrichment, allowing everyone to participate in fundamental, understandable, and non-competitive athletics. Each class always includes activities like a warm-up, stretch, introduction to the sport, various games to stay moving or the always popular obstacle course, a cool down, and a quick focus on a part of the body, reinforcing the value of our muscles and skeletal structure. Parents love it when their kids come home talking about their phalanges!

To learn more about the benefits of youth activity and everything Kidokinetics has to offer and to sign up for one of their programs or summer camp sessions, visit https://kidokinetics.com/semichigan/ or contact them directly at semichigan@kidokinetics.com and (734) 997-7095. ■

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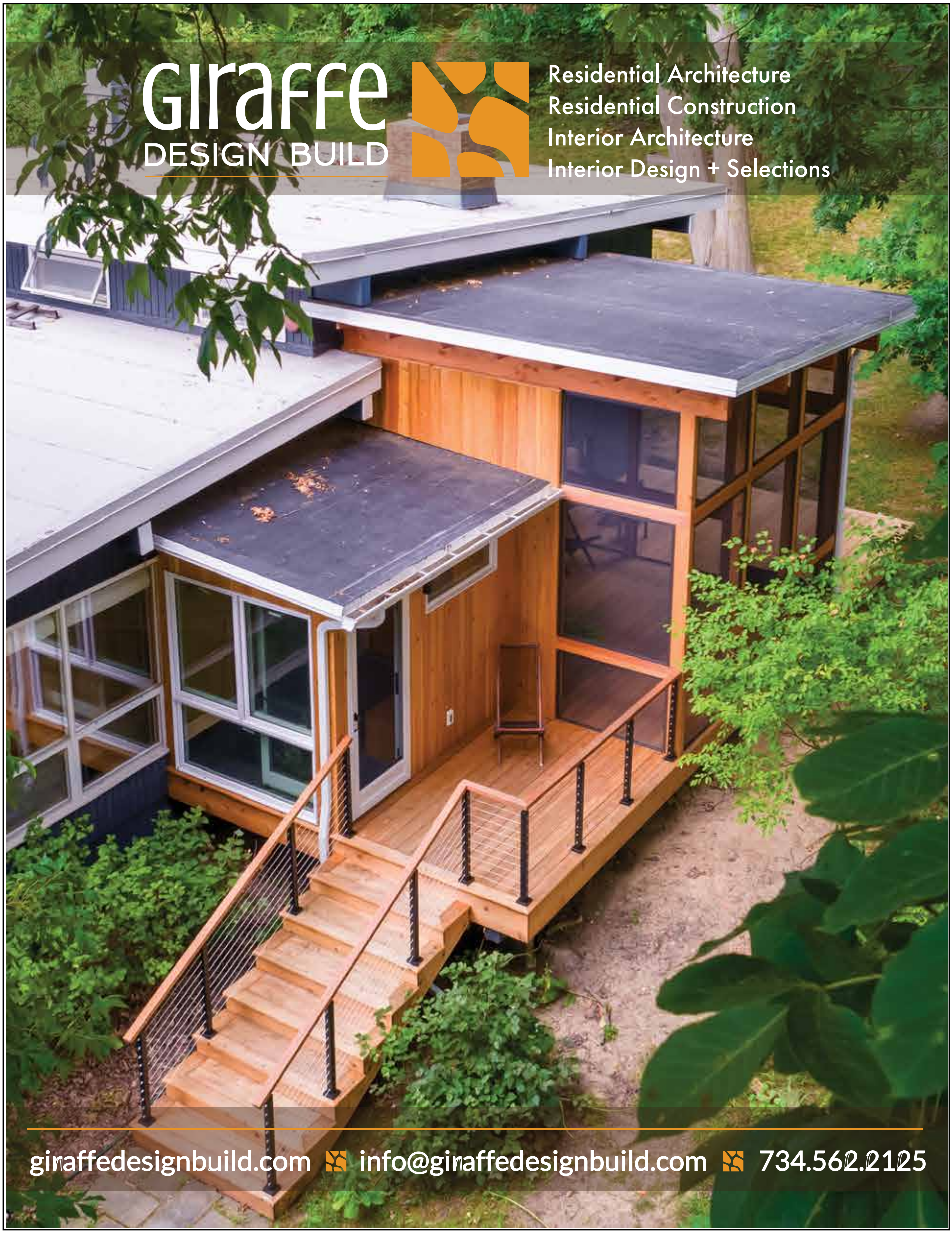
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